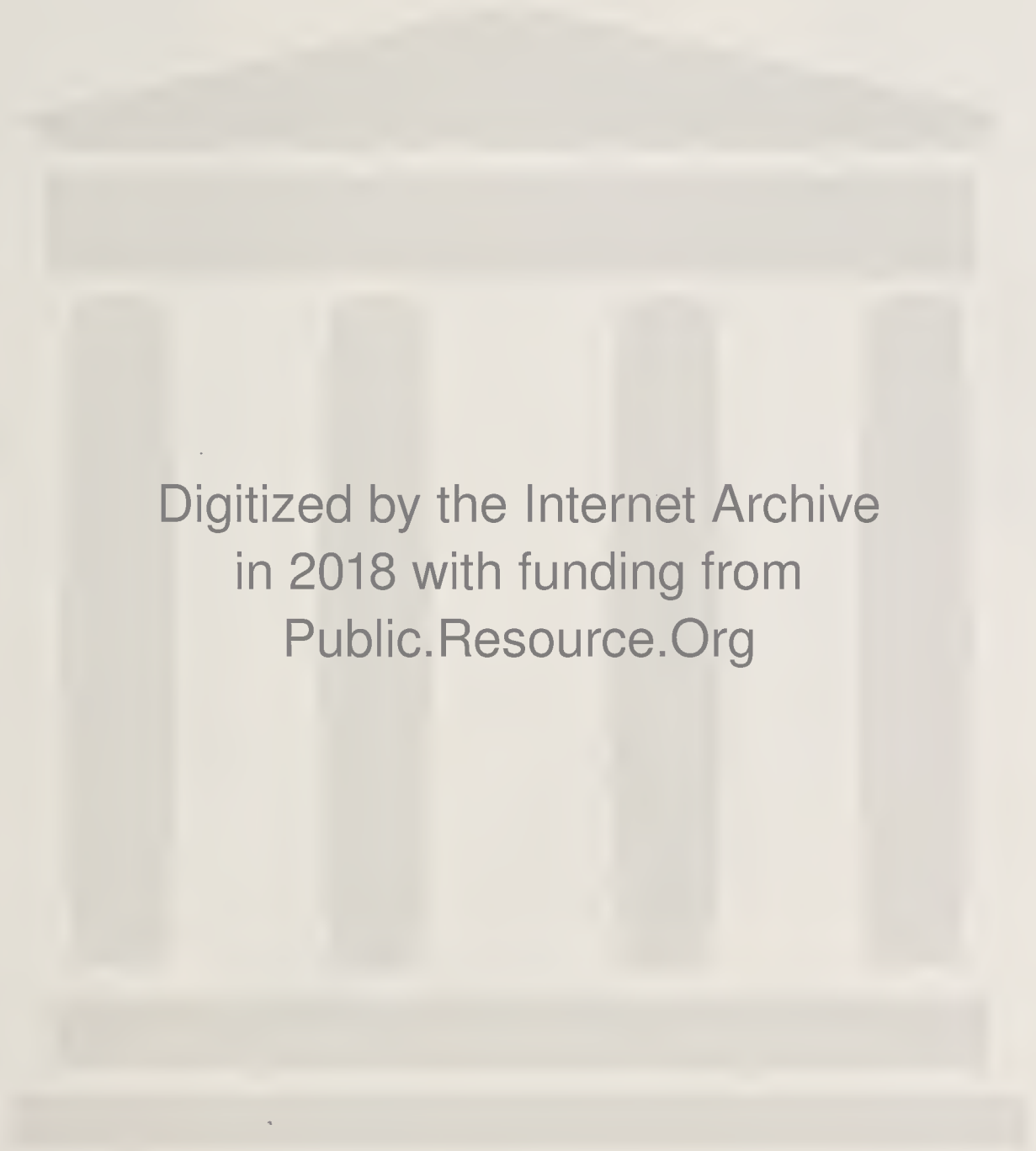


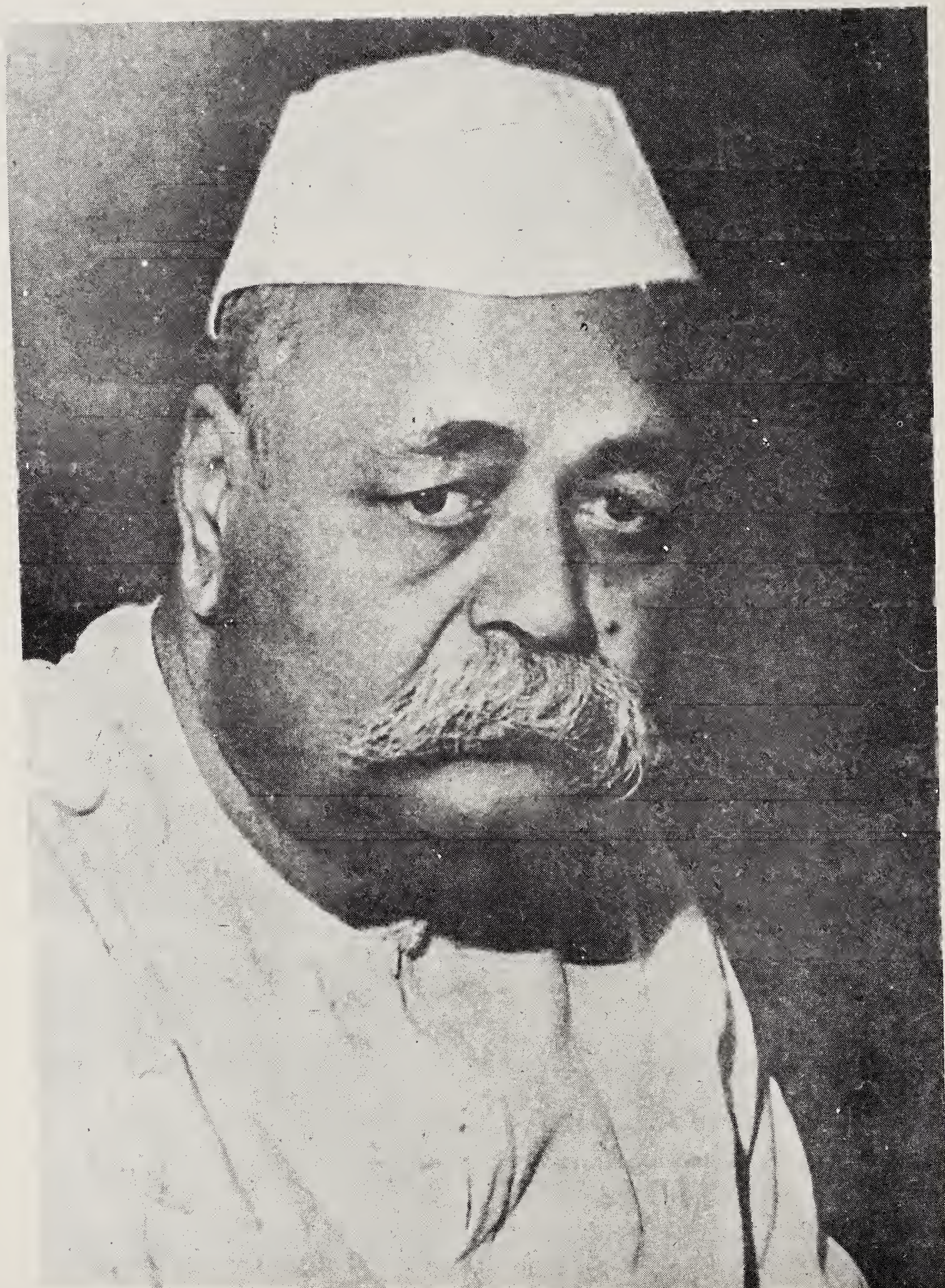
BUILDERS
OF
MODERN
INDIA

GOVIND BALLABH PANT

SUDHAKAR PANDEY



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Builders of Modern India

GOVIND BALLABH PANT

SUDHAKAR PANDEY

Translated by Sarala Jag Mohan

PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
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About the Series

This series is intended to record for posterity the story of the struggles and achievements of the distinguished sons and daughters of India who have been mainly instrumental in our national renaissance and the attainment of Independence.

The biographies under this series, are planned as handy volumes written by knowledgeable people. The object is to give a brief account, in simple words, of the life and activities of the eminent leaders and of their times. They neither claim to be comprehensive studies nor a replacement of the more detailed biographies.

The work of writing these biographies has to be entrusted to different people. It has, therefore, not been possible to publish the biographies in a chronological order. It is hoped, however, that all eminent national personalities will figure in this series shortly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This book is being published by the Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. A large number of valuable and authentic books have been brought out in the "Builders of Modern India Series" throwing light on the achievements of several national leaders who built modern India. I am grateful to the Government of India, particularly the Publications Division, for giving me this opportunity of writing about Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant in this important series.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was a politician, who among the builders of modern India, possessed a rare and radical personality. I too have learnt something at his feet and I also owe him a debt of gratitude. Therefore, it is natural that I should be particularly interested in writing about him. This book is not merely Pantji's biography. It is also an analysis of his regulating actions as well as the constructive interpretation of the national situation. Several books about Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant have been written by acknowledged learned authorities and they have their own importance in their respective fields. The works of all those writers have remained a source of strength for me. I have also depended on many journals and periodicals and in the process, have tried to grasp the essence of the perceptions of the age which enabled Pantji to make the country and society welfare-oriented through his actions. I am indebted to all those writers and editors who have inspired me through their books and writings on this subject. I am also grateful to all those writers on whose works I have drawn while writing this book. Those books have been acknowledged in the list of the References.

I had seen Pantji as a favourite of his intimate political colleague and friend Dr. Sampurnanand and as a young assistant

to Acharya Narendra Dev. But I have also something of my own in my acquaintance with him.

In writing this book I have tried hard not to burden it with quotations, and at the same time, to remain true to facts. This book is written as an evaluation of the life of Pandit Pant, as a nation-builder. In this context, welfare of the nation has been my criterion. National welfare cannot be distinct from public welfare. It only complements the public welfare. I am confident that the readers would be able to accept this book which fulfils this aim to a certain extent.

In writing this book, I have received affection and co-operation from Shri Krishna Chandra Pant and his celebrated family for which I am indebted.

It is hoped that in view of its value, people would read his book and dedicate themselves to the service of nation. This is the true justification for writing this book.

Sudhakar Pandey

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INTRODUCTION

In every sense, 19th century was the most important period that gave rise to the great personalities who were the pioneers of public welfare work in modern India. From religion to philosophy and society to culture and in the fields of the art and literature, great people were born in this land who aroused the latent inner awareness of India's Independence. The beginning of the era of Indian Independence has acquired the lustre and brilliance because of the *Sadhana* of these indomitable *Sadhakas*. Whoever was born in that age, was original, unique and top most in his field and had raised the country and society through his determination to devote himself to the welfare of the people and dedicated work. Pandit Pant too was one of those outstanding personalities. Because of the originality of his character, he deserves a place of great honour in the history of modern India.

The Himalayas have always enriched the Indian soil through the wisdom of seers and sages, men of learning and *Sadhakas*. But Pandit Pant, brought glory even to politics. He was the greatest gift to Indian politics from the Himalayas. He was not a person to get entangled in the maze of principles and ideologies, but a great son of the land whose actions led to public welfare. He is remembered in history as the builder of modern Uttar Pradesh*, the connecting link that joined the hill region of Uttar Pradesh with the national mainstream, the statesman who aroused the emotions of the people with the sanctifying ideas of Mahatma Gandhi, an incomparable orator in Parliament, an ideal leader of the Opposition, a dedicated man with a constructive attitude and for his attainment as a parliamentarian. But his greatest quality was his ability to give his best to society by accepting the basic conceptual consciousness of

* Uttar Pradesh was formerly known as the United Provinces. In this book, the two names have been used as interchangeable terms.

Indian life in modern perspective. He worked with devotion and persistence for his avowed objective of public welfare throughout his life. Home and family were not his priorities. He was the leader of a vast, poor and miserable and downtrodden society. Till the last moment, he lived for the country.

Pandit Pant was an accomplished lawyer. He had earned wealth and means of comfortable life through his legal practice. But he was an outstanding man of learning who sacrificed everything for the sake of the country. He was a staunch idealist who believed in action. When he took part in the boycott of the Simon Commission along with Jawaharlal Nehru, he suffered terrible physical injuries which left him with a trembling body for the rest of his life. But without bothering about his physical condition, he courted imprisonment during all the national movements since 1930. As the first Chief Minister of U.P. he consolidated Congress in such a way that everyone came to the conclusion that the Indians were capable of ruling better than the British. In the field of administrative set up too he had the ability to propose constructive legislations for the welfare of the people of the country. He laid the foundation of a successful tradition of democratic rule in Uttar Pradesh.

He presents himself with his original personality and action at every important turning point in the national history. That was his special characteristic. Born in a distant hill area, he impregnated the politics of the whole country with his own fragrance.

Under his leadership, Uttar Pradesh was in the forefront in all constructive and creative fields, and in his absence, it gradually started lagging behind. This is the evidence of the contribution he made in that State. The Congress pledged both for the language and the nation. The manner in which he carried out the resolution of the linguistic states was something like giving the finishing touch to the unfinished task of Sardar Patel. On the one hand, he was the carrier of the Gandhian ideology, and on the other, he combined it with the diligence of Sardar Patel. More than anything else, he had a

tremendous faith in Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the symbol of India's hope and aspirations, and he cherished for him lifelong love and actively co-operated with him in all fronts. As a result he acquired a personality absolutely distinct from others. He was not merely a great political leader and a statesman, but also the builder of a future generation. We do not find another such conjunctive leader in this age who could bring together mutually opposed forces and put their essentially good qualities to proper use. He could go along with persons like Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Babu Sampurnanand, Krishna Dutt Paliwal, Ajit Prasad Jain and Charan Singh and channelise their qualitative attainments to public welfare. This was his unique characteristic.

Being a genuine politician is a great characteristic. But even greater is to sacrifice oneself for the sake of ideals, society and the country. And still the greater quality is not to lose one's sense of judgement while doing those things. And the greatest quality is to remain a human being in spite of all those virtues, to recognize human qualities and never allow those values to be eclipsed from one's personality which are the great attributes of our tradition and our land.

He was not obdurate, but was an Indian in the true sense of the term. Under no circumstances did he allow humanness to be insulted. That was exactly why he earned honour and respect from the contemporary leaders of Uttar Pradesh like Acharya Narendra Dev, Babu Purushottam Das Tandon, Babu Sampurnanand, Acharya Kripalani etc. Through his contacts with such people, he not only carved out a path for himself, but also left an imprint of his radical personality on Indian politics. This was because he was competent, diligent and indomitable. A politician breaks, but a builder connects. Pantji was a great *Sadhaka*. He was a person with a great sense of duty and possessed qualities that bring people together. It is great to be a dreamer, but greater still to translate those dreams into reality. He was not only a dreamer but also a creator who turned his dreams into action.

Life becomes spiritless without politics, literature, culture and music. He was a lover of classical music and also a champion of Hindi. The story of his campaign for according the status of official language to Hindi lies hidden in history. He extended the scope of service in his life through "Prem Sabha" which was a branch of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha of Kashi. He himself maintained his association with the Nagari Pracharini Sabha till the last moment. The Nagari Pracharini Sabha was resurrected during his presidency. He had planned and directed the book series like *Vishvakosh*, *Shabda Sagar*, *Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihas* etc. He not only called the meetings of the Sabha at his residence, but very often went to the office of the Sabha to attend to its work. He believed that Hindi was the link that would unite the nation and only that type of Hindi could grow and develop which was accepted by the entire nation. He regarded language, literature and culture as the media that unite but not disintegrate. He was a staunch believer in building up national unity through language. His work for promoting Hindi would particularly be remembered as a matter of great honour.

For fifty years, he consistently and devotedly served the nation, society and the Hindi language. Wherever and whenever necessary, he offered guidance and made sacrifice. He was a born political leader who cherished faith in the Indian culture that laid stress on giving and not taking. Because of his efficacy and hard work, he always succeeded in attaining his ideals.

He was an individual with his own stance and was on the high peaks of Indian politics. He would always be remembered in the history of India for his extraordinary and constructive ability which had its own brilliance and was backed by a sense of determination. In the present situation, by bowing respectfully to his great virtues, we would be blessed and inspired and thereby would acquire strength to make our country great.

Author

CONTEMPORARY BACKGROUND

FOR MODERN INDIA, the first war of independence in 1857 was the beginning of the recognition of people's aspirations as well as inculcating the feeling of new awakening. This great war succeeded in fully consolidating the British power in India. But the defeat of the people also became a source of inspiration for taking the dreams of their aspiration to freedom towards the direction of fulfilment. On the foundation of the war of Independence of 1857, the country made a successful attempt to raise the great edifice of Freedom.

India has been a civilized country for thousands of years, with its own invincible culture. India's approach in understanding the religion of the land and the essence of time is conventional and yet it is modern, and though modern, it is still traditional. The vitality that lends glory to time and place through the magnificence of the past, is the very soul of India's progress and consciousness. Not only in 1857, but on several other occasions, the country had allowed itself to fall and had become oblivious to its own identity. But its eternal power to triumph over the times has never weakened. Ours is a country not of alternatives and anomalies, but consistencies and churning of thought to discover the essence of life. If time is without end, then in this country, life has no end either. The wisdom of India has always combined these two eternities and we have faced defeat every time disintegration has interrupted that process. Mere physical yoga has never been considered the supreme end of life in our country. Rather, the unity of self and integrity of man alone have been regarded as ultimate attainment. Journey from darkness to eternal light alone has been the basic tenet of Indian thought.

Those who are lured by physical comforts and regard them as the highest goal of life and discard their basic good sense for the sake of power and self-promotion, are not respected and honoured in India. When such people make progress in society, they do dazzle the eyes like a flash of lightning, and dark clouds of unfavourable times loom over the world. But ultimately, only the lustre of the autumn and the spring have impressed the country with their dignified splendour. That is exactly why our people tend to bow not before kings and emperors, but before saints and sages, *sadhakas* and literary men. Nineteenth century was such an extraordinary period when highly eminent personalities were born. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was the brilliant flag-bearer of this very tradition. It is not possible to understand the essence of his personality without getting acquainted with the time, place and society in which he was born.

British Rule and Western Impact

So far, all those people with whom India came into contact had become the children of this land in spite of being foreigners. Their homes, life and their last moments were related to the soil of this country. They had mingled with the mainstream of Indian life like the original inhabitants of the land. But the British rule was the rule of such conquerors who, because of their power and influence in the world, had established themselves in a position which had its own unique attraction, and had become a symbol of power and authority all over the world. Through their power and intellectual performance, they had proved their superiority on the world stage for several centuries. They had inherited a scientific tradition. They had succeeded in grasping the mysteries of nature and exploiting them for expanding their own power. They had not become rulers with any motive of service. Exploitation was their primary aim. For this purpose, they made conscious attempts to consolidate their rule by concentrating all power in the government. They had their own life pattern. For their expansion, they considered religious and cultural propagation also very imperative. They had influenced many

nations with their modernity, religion and culture. They had occupied high position of power, but knew how to influence the thought pattern of the people of this country in order to put their power and authority on a permanent footing. This art of impressing the opponents provided the basis for their expansion in the country. That is why through the English Christian Missionaries, they tried to influence the minds of the Indian people and used them as the carriers of Britain's culture through propagation of education and scientific outlook with the help of industrialisation and thus provided second class citizenship to the people of India. For the first time, the Indians felt that they were being ruled by those who lived "across the seven seas" and their representatives who were free to do anything they fancied. Going against them meant punishment, affliction, persecution and harassment.

New Awakening

The people of India were aware of the reason of their downfall. Literacy could be of help in developing a sense of discretion, but even the illiterate people could be prudent and their discerning sense could be more impressive and effective. The people of India may not have been literate, but they have always been discerning and they understand the real significance of values. Mere wealth and sexual pleasures have not been determining factors for them. They indulge even in these things with a view to attain salvation. The yoga of fourfold endeavour in life alone is the basis of the field of activity to an Indian. He cannot conceive of any attainment so long as the entire process of living is not guided by the yogic origin of this fourfold endeavour. Mutual dissensions, jealousies, hatred, temptations of power and material comfort and dearth of knowledge and science had been responsible for India's downfall and it had given rise to such conventions and traditions which led to the defeat of the country and hindered its growth. The people of India became aware of this and then this country was impatient to reinstate its original values so that it could gain freedom once again and become great in every field. The War of Independence of 1857 laid the

foundation for the creation of the national front for reinstating those Indian values.

The soil of India had always been a place for the worship of Man and Mother Earth. Here, the image of Mother India came to be gradually engrained in the minds of the people. Their sense of discernment gave it a form and knowledge gave it lustre and organisation led to the extension of that form. Britain was a country which had established its authority over other nations of the world because of its strength and power. People of India had begun to realize that fact and the country which the Englishmen regarded as their colony, became for us the land we worshipped as Mother. The nation was now determined to work for the protection and freedom of Mother India.

While on the one hand, the War of 1857 revealed to the world our determinations, on the other hand, it made the British Government alert and active in order to permanently establish its power and its empire for all time to come. The British were very well aware how the people of India were determined to fight and were firm in their resolve. But they did not know that even the dust raised through dissipation could become for us the sacred ash. They did not know that in every ruination and destruction and darkness, lay hidden the power to create and the light to dispell the darkness. The British people, known for their determination, remained firm in their resolve to rule India. But they continued to extend their self-interest in the name of service in even new forms. They pursued the policy of expanding their self-interest through religious conversions, but they did not succeed to the extent they had expected. They succeeded only to a certain extent in influencing the selfish, illiterate, ignorant and backward classes of people, because the cultural influences against which they were fighting were not less alive or ancient than their own. Consequently, along with this measure, they took the help of science to strengthen their desire to exploit the country. They started the fast development of means of transport and communication in the country so that with their help, they could hasten the process of wealth drain on the one hand and facilitate the army

movement on the other. They started laying railway lines all over the country and also expanded post and telegraph services. The rulers were given more and more means of sustenance and support. There is no doubt that through these acts they enhanced their power and made it more effective. But this, in turn, led to another reaction. The scattered thought patterns of the country automatically got linked together in closer contacts. Railways and postal system also gave birth to a sense of unity among the people. They started getting closer to each other and were also inspired by determination to mutually share their happiness and sorrow. Poverty and misery bring people together. Wealth and power gave rise to wantonness and arrogance. They lead to dissensions. And that was what exactly happened.

The people of India realized the need for being united and organised in all fields. Political organisation was not possible in those days. Hence, people thought in terms of religious and social organisations. The people of this country are very religious and in that age, religion was harmless to a certain extent. That was also one reason why great men blazed the trail of their creative *sadhana* in that field. The first name that comes to mind is that of Raja Rammohan Roy who was social in spite of being religious and religious in spite of being social. He had studied English literature and civilization extensively. He was conversant with Persian and Sanskrit languages. He was an accomplished and enlightend person, guided by constructive ideas about the future. He was aware that however great our literature and culture may have been the country would have to adopt modernity. Then alone the country would be able to make progress. At the same time, he had tremendous faith in his own religion and liberal traditions. He wanted to combine the idea of welfare underlying both these. He also knew that then alone the future of India would become bright. Any person who wanted to do this was bound to determine his policies in a manner that would lead to social awakening, intellectual awareness and uplift of the country. He wanted to determine that such a policy would not only have to think in terms of religious organisation, but of an organisation for the purpose of spreading and propagating these ideas. And for spreading his ideas, he would also have to adopt modern means

which may help this process. These include discussions, publication of journals and magazines, writing of books, public meetings etc. At the same time, he would also have to establish special educational institutions with a view to build a future he may have envisaged. In his own way, Raja Rammohan Roy did all these things.

Raja Rammohan Roy mastered several languages. It was also his achievement that even while he was in service, he never turned his attention away from the field of education. He believed that monotheism alone would be of help in organising the country and he adopted it for himself. He did it not with a closed mind but after testing it in a discerning manner on intellectual and national basis. Rationalism not only analyses the past, it also provides strength for the creation of future in the light of the needs of the present. The conjunction of the new with the conventional is the reward of true nationalism. Even before him, we did go by faith and trust, but we did not have any concept about the future. We believed that we have got everything and we would be able to achieve everything only with what we have. The Indian outlook has always been opposed to such a view. Customs and traditions and systems are born and they die according to the needs of the time and convenience. Rituals may be part of religion, but they can never be the soul of religion. Rituals are related to time and place. He started a campaign to propagate this new line of thinking. He enjoys great credit as the pioneer who introduced nationalism in public life in modern India. He not only carried on a campaign for nationalism, but also realized truth. Although he was a Bengali writer and litterateur, he also wrote in English and was also well acquainted with the Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian languages. He also studied Hebrew language to be able to read the original version of Bible. He knew the history of the European Renaissance. That was the reason why he wanted to take the country towards a new creative world by freeing it from blind faith, polytheism, sectarianism etc. He was the first to assess the new situation by adopting a firm and discerning attitude and he functioned as a bridge between the rationalist way of life of the West and the religious traditions of India.

He took upon himself the responsibility of protecting Hinduism against Christianity but with wisdom. He said that it pained him to acknowledge the fact that the prevailing religious system of the Hindus was such that it could not look after their political interests. It contained countless things that led to divisions and sub-divisions among them. The caste-system had completely deprived them of modern political consciousness. Innumerable rituals and rites as well as mystical religious practices of the *siddhas* had rendered them incapable of hard and adventurous life. He believed that it was necessary that their religion should undergo some change at least from the point of view of their political and social welfare.

Thus, Raja Rammohan Roy attempted to relate religion to social and political life. That was the reason why he proceeded not on the basis of rites and rituals, but the *Vedanta*, the original source of Hinduism. He was opposed to religious rituals and blind faith. Hence, his religious thoughts, though Vedantist, were yet time-tested. He established the Brahmo Samaj for the attainment of those ideas. He worshipped the Formless, Immutable, Omnipotent God which he considered as the fundamental tenet of Hinduism. Thus, he tried to bring into Hinduism elements of pragmatism and elasticity. He was the pioneer of that *sadhana*, whereby religion could play its role in bringing about social revolution and political consciousness. At the same time, he gave equal respect to all religions and wanted to make the Brahmo Samaj a forum of religious unity through the comparative study of all religions. In reality, he was not the pioneer of a religious campaign, but a leader and a thinker who, in modern India, related religion to society.

He who wishes to relate religion to life, would like to abolish social evils with the help of scriptures so that the consequent change could receive scientific recognition. For that purpose, it is also necessary to arouse public opinion. Hence, he created an unprecedented atmosphere in society with regard to the questions of child marriages, the sati custom, respect to women etc. and engrained his beliefs in popular mind.

The Anti-Sati Act was passed in 1829. He also propagated the message of individual freedom. Persons like Bipin Chandra Pal respected him as the first person in India to propagate the message of independence. For the propagation of his ideas, he developed a system suitable to his times, from which the future organisations in the country, whether they were political parties, cultural bodies or religious foundations, sought help in order to develop their own methods of functioning. He took help not only of the new way of thinking, but also of those means which the Christian missionaries were adopting for the propagation of their religion. Spending his own money, he brought out the papers *Samvad Kaumudi* (1821) and *Mirat-ul* (1822) and got several books published.

He was also a thinker, who made widespread preparations for future changes. He helped in establishing several colleges in India or gave contribution so that India could get every possible advantage of European thought and modern knowledge and science could be accommodated with the Indian view of life. His name is on the top of all those who were responsible for the setting up of the modern system of education in India. The establishment of the Hindu College in 1818 was the result of a memorandum he had submitted to the Governor-General of India, introducing the modern system of education. He had the Anglo-Hindu College and the Vedanta College established in 1822 and 1825 respectively. Calcutta and the adjoining areas would always be grateful to him for the initiatives he took in starting of several educational institutions. At the same time, he will always be remembered as the founder of a new system of education in India. He went on a European tour in 1833. His contribution is being discussed at such length because he gave to India the framework of progress, in which there was an element that linked the living traditions of religion and knowledge in society with modernity. Keshab Chandra Sen and others carried forward this work and contributed significantly in building the modern social life. Bengal alone was the soil of revolutionary thinking at that time. Hence, the whole country looked toward Bengal.

Swami Dayanand and Arya Samaj

Swami Dayanand emerged on the Indian horizon as a living representative of a new cultural awareness in India. He served the country till 1833. He set out in 1845 in search of knowledge. This great man devoted himself to the pursuit of truth after becoming a disciple of Swami Vijayanand. He made a deep study of our scriptures and thought and reflected on them. After a debate on scriptures in 1869 at Kashi the country came to regard him as a great thinker and philosopher. He also met Keshab Chandra Sen and wrote *Satyartha Prakash*. He set up an organisation called Arya Samaj in 1875. He tried to spread his ideas all over the country. He interacted with people throughout the country and accepted Hindi as a medium for the fulfilment of his objectives and he always used that language. Brahmo Samaj had exercised its influence in a limited way among the intellectuals. But Arya Samaj brought in the country a new dawn of social and religious awakening.

Arya Samaj was a popular movement, through which in the 19th century, an institution was set up which was devoted to the campaign of public welfare and which formed the basis of the awakening in the country. For Arya Samaj, the source of inspiration was not Europe but India itself, and through it, nationalism and Hindi as the national language spread widely. While Arya Samaj took a stand against orthodox traditions, blind faith and pomp and show, it also supported the idea of the Formless God who is without beginning and without birth and is omniscient and omnipresent. Swami Dayanand strongly protested against the ideas of incarnations and idol worship. All his beliefs and convictions were based on the Vedas and the Upanishads. His campaign for social reform was based on teachings of Vedas. In the modern times, he was responsible for linking the Vedantic philosophy to the world for which he would be remembered in the history of modern India. He accepted the idea of religious conversion. Hence, he also started the campaign for purification. But he never turned away from nationalism. He established the distinctions of community and caste on the basis of the Vedic principles; but he was strongly opposed to caste

hierarchy. He supported the caste system not on the basis of birth but of man's actions. He also believed that an individual, by his qualities, could move from one caste to another. He was a staunch supporter of granting equal rights to women. He also advocated equal opportunities for women in the field of education and was a strong supporter of amelioration of the untouchables. Arya Samaj opened schools and colleges in several places through which he prepared groups of young people who carried his ideas far and wide. The network of schools and colleges established by Arya Samaj also became a determining factor of a brilliant vision of life in the field of modern education. Arya Samaj emerged in such a national campaign for religious and social reforms which helped in inculcating a sense of unity among Hindus and also a feeling of self respect for their religion. He was a great Vedic saint of modern India. He had a vision of the future and his contribution in building modern India is of great significance.

Swami Vivekanand

Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj played their own respective roles in the country. However, a very large section of the people was not affected by them. They felt that the supporters of both these groups had not accepted all aspects of Hinduism. At that moment of time, it was Swami Vivekanand who worked to give a new form to the traditional Hindu religion and aroused a feeling of self-confidence and cherished complete faith in religious traditions. Vivekanand took a vow to establish superiority of India's spiritualism and philosophy in the world. He travelled all round the world to establish humanism inherent in Hinduism. This led to the kindling of patriotic spirit in the country. He studied in the institutions that imparted Western type of education. He was adept in English language and even studied Sanskrit treatises in depth. He made the scriptures, guru and Bharat Mata his pillars of support. He drew knowledge from the scriptures and his guru Ramakrishna Paramahansa who gave him a sense of discretion. In 1886, after the demise of his guru, he himself became a thinker and a visionary as

well as an organiser. From 1888 to 1892, he visited all sacred places of the country through which he got a clear vision of the spirit of India. He visited America in 1896 to attend the All Religions Conference where through the exposition of the Vedantic thought, he placed the Indian view of life and the religious doctrines of Hinduism before the world. He returned to India in 1896 and lived till 1902. That divine angel who established in a forthright manner India's respect and the superiority of Indian philosophy in the world, departed from the world at the age of 39 years.

He was himself a seeker after Truth. He believed that each individual should seek Truth. He considered brotherhood and a humanistic, liberal view of life an important part of the Hindu religion. He was a great thinker who accepted Hinduism in its totality, re-established India's dignity and self-respect among the traditionally minded people. He was a person who had faith in exchange of ideas and beliefs. He was eager to give to the world what was the best in India. For that very reason, he never showed any contempt for good things in European life and favoured the acceptance of all that was good in the West. He regarded religion as a vehicle of public welfare. His religion amounted to entertaining faith in the uplift of all human beings and he was a great votary of liberation of man. He nurtured and nourished the tradition that carried religion out of the 'kitchen' and brought it down to the people.

He was against evils of caste-system. He loved the people who were poor, ignorant, and without support. Even though he remained aloof from political ideologies, his way of thinking became a source of inspiration to the revolutionary and nationalist leaders.

Theosophical Society

American philosopher Colonel Alcott and a Russian lady Petrova Blavatsky had established the Theosophical Society of India in 1870 at Adyar near Madras. This was the original centre of the Theosophical Society in India. All activities of the Society were

directed from there. Mrs. Annie Besant was the President of the Theosophical Society of India from 1893 to 1933. In its own way, the Society played a significant role in the political, cultural and spiritual resurgence in India. The Society was established by the foreigners primarily for the attainment of *Brahmavidya* and direct perception of spiritual powers for self-realization. But the conditions prevailing in India as well as the environment, nature and the milieu changed its character.

The Theosophical Society was not a sectarian body. It was based on the comparative study of religions with a view to establish brotherhood among all human beings. An individual could be a Theosophist even while he pursued his own religion. It was an admirable attempt by foreigners to arouse a sense of pride among the individuals for religious treatises, especially those of India. Even though Mrs. Annie Besant was an English woman, she had become an Indian through her own inner inspiration. The translation of the Gita, commentaries on the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and the propagation in foreign countries of the basic principles extracted and compiled from the religious books of India are a proof of the fact that she was not merely the pioneer of a spiritual campaign, but also made a significant contribution to the educational system of the country. Mrs. Annie Besant was not merely a leader of rootless spiritualism, but she was a Congress leader from 1910 to 1920. Because of her differences with the Congress on account of its programme of non-cooperation movement led by Gandhiji, she dissociated herself from politics and got completely involved in the activities of the Theosophical Society. She was against the imitation of the West and wanted to build the Indian society on the basis of the ancient structure. She had established several educational institutions with this end in view.

All these religious campaigns, though apparently different, were complementary to one another. These campaigns strengthened the attempts in the direction of service to man and national awakening. If power and authority are the means to exploitation, religion is for social service and customs and conventions etc. are

meant only for the uplift of society. All these organisations gave rise to that feeling in their respective fields. All of them sought to create peaceful conditions for the afflicted people through the medium of service. All of them laid stress on their past glory which gave birth to unity and creative thinking. Evil customs could never be part of religion. Abolishing such customs itself is religion, because religion leads to uplift of mankind. A sense of determination was born in society to do away with all those customs and traditions that obstructed the process of social amelioration.

Beginning of Political Awakening

It was not only religion or saints and sages who brought about such a campaign. Men like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Mahadev Govind Ranade also made significant contributions to infuse in society the resuscitative power at their own level. The contribution of these great men in giving a concrete shape to these basic values is so great that the social history of modern India would have been poorer without their contributions. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar not only brought a legislation in support of widow remarriage, he also arranged many such marriages. He vehemently opposed the practice of dowry and consumption of liquor. He also made organised attempts to prevent liquor consumption. At the same time, he also made contribution in the literary field and learning. Hindi also received great support from him.

Apart from his contribution in the field of politics, Mahadev Govind Ranade also lent support to the social activities in the country. He launched several campaigns for social reforms and formed committees for national reforms, whose sessions coincided with the Congress sessions. He was a judge of the Bombay High Court. He championed the cause of women's uplift and was not the one to be overawed by the impact of the West. He desired every individual to take a vow to abolish evil social customs and awaken his own conscience. Instead of legislative methods, he favoured giving a new form to traditional values in society and their inculcation.

In those days, the problems pertaining to social reforms were considered separate from politics. Even though Ranade tried to correlate the two, politics continued to have its own way.

Role of the British

It was after 1857 that the British rule decided in terms of consolidating itself in India. For that very reason, while on the one hand, it started the process of political reforms, on the other hand, it also made a well-considered attempt to deprive the Princely States of their financial resources and authority so that they should not pose any danger in future.

Situation in Afghanistan

Their attention was drawn to other neighbouring countries, particularly Afghanistan. In 1855, a treaty was signed between the governments of Afghanistan and India for permanent peace and friendship. In 1856, when Persia attacked Iraq, an army contingent was sent there from Bombay. Another treaty was signed with Amir in 1857 according to which a representative of the British Government had been posted in Kabul. Till 1876, Viceroy Lawrence, Mayo and Northbrook remained indifferent to Afghanistan. In 1876, the policy was changed again and the British government started thinking along the lines of not allowing the Russian influence to grow in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, Lawrence did not want to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. At the same time also arose the question of the entire Western border of India. Lawrence was not in favour of defence preparations on that border which lay parallel to the Sind border from where the mountain ranges began. There was a long mountain region between the borders of India and Afghanistan, inhabited by various Pathan tribes. Hence, there was a growing demand for establishing the British authority over the tribes of this central region. But Lawrence was still firm in his policy of non-interference.

He remained neutral even in the matter of conflict over succession to the throne in Afghanistan. In 1869, Mayo was ready to give full help to Sher Ali because he had come out victorious in the internal conflict in Afghanistan. Even this new policy adopted by Mayo was not of interference but of neutrality. After Mayo, Northbrooke also followed the same policy.

After 1879, Lord Lytton started exercising his influence in Afghan politics right from the beginning. Even though that policy had been laid down only by the British Government, Lord Lytton was responsible for its implementation. It was only as a consequence of this policy that the second Afghan War was fought, and without winning Amir's confidence, he was declared an enemy under some pretext or the other. With the War breaking out between Russia and Turkey, the British Home Minister threatened to mobilize armies against Russia. In turn, Russia also started increasing its influence on the Afghan border. Consequently, a British mission was sent to Kabul on September 20, 1878. The mission, however, was unsuccessful. A contingent of the British army was sent to Afghanistan on November, 20, 1878, which conquered the region. Sher Ali fled to the Russia where he died in February, 1879. In the meantime, at the time of the military triumph of the British, Amir had to dance to the tune of the British. In May, 1879, the Gandmak Treaty was signed between Amir's son Yaqub Khan and the Government of India by which he accepted the British supremacy. The Afghans are independent minded people. Kavagnary had been appointed the British Resident there and he started his work in that very year. A revolt broke out in Afghanistan just within two months and the British Resident was killed. Once again, British armies were sent to Afghanistan and they captured Kabul. After the defeat of the Diradi Government in Britain in 1880, Lord Ripon was sent to India as the Viceroy, in pursuance of the new policy and he raised the subject of improving relations with Afghanistan.

Expansionist Policy in Burma and Tibet

Lord Dalhousie annexed two-third of Burma, and later, the remaining territory was also captured to the extent that in 1882, the Burmese ruler was deprived of all his political authority. The process of fully including Burma in the British territory was completed in 1883. The British tried to bring Tibet also under their domination and ultimately, a war was fought at a place called Guru in which eight hundred and forty out of two thousand Tibetan soldiers were killed. Gyantse was brought under British control in April 1904 and the British army captured Lhasa in August, 1904. The treaty signed with Lhasa did not harm the Russian interests in any way; but it did not prove to be of any benefit to India either. Tibet remained under the heels of the British authority. When the British army was withdrawn from Tibet, the Chinese started establishing their authority there. Through an understanding reached between Russia and Britain in 1907, it was decided that the two powers would neither have any compromise with Tibet against the wishes of China nor would they send any of their representatives there. This policy of Lord Curzon brought Tibet under the Chinese control.

When an attempt was made during 1888-1890 to have a bilateral treaty between the Governments of China and India, the Tibetan Government was not ready to have any pact over the affairs of Sikkim. There was a pact between India and China in 1890 that Sikkim would be a protected territory under the British rule, and India would have complete control over its internal administration and foreign affairs. The line of demarcation of the borders between Tibet and Sikkim was also drawn. In a way, Sikkim was brought under the control of the British agent and the ruler of Sikkim migrated to Tibet. All those things were being done in the interests of the British for which the expenditure was being met only by the people of India. Limitless Indian funds were being spent for the expansion of the British empire and for the protection of their trade at a time when India was reeling under drought and famine. The people of India realized all those things and were feeling very

agitated. The intellectual minds of India were aflame with the feeling that Indian money was being utilised for the expansion of the British rule.

British Policy of Administrative Reforms

On one hand, the British rule was extending its influence and on the other, in view of the first war of Independence of 1857, it was also introducing administrative reforms at the central and provincial levels. After the war of 1857, Lytton, Ripon and Curzon had introduced these administrative changes. Now their policy was to have such a far-sighted, effective, well-knit and well-structured administrative system which would keep India within the British Empire for all time. They were keen to have an efficient administration so that the political authority of Great Britain would be put on a permanent footing.

They could not satisfy the intelligentsia of the Indian society by adopting the short-sighted policy of providing political advantages and favours. The British rulers were afraid of India and the Indian people did not trust them. The absence of trust made the Indian people doubt the motives of their attempts to introduce political reforms. Their doubts became stronger when the administration did not come forward with any relief measures during the famine. The Famine Commission simply went on deliberating for two years over the question of eliminating the conditions that led to famine. In 1878, Lord Lytton himself had to accept that the famine should have been fought with greater preparedness. A huge amount of one crore rupees was spent to fight the famine, but millions of people died in the Bombay Presidency alone. That condition provoked more contempt for the British.

In 1879, tax was levied on imported textiles after the departure of Lord Northbrook which was to the advantage of the British. Along with this, Lytton also clamped control on the vernacular newspapers so that the people should not know the truth. Lord

Ripon introduced changes in administrative services so that the British officials would remain at the top even though Indians could be appointed as magistrates and to other positions of responsibility. That decision was taken for political reasons so that the British interests would remain safe and protected. Since Lytton did not trust the entire educated community, it was decided to appoint for government services only those who were born in influential and respected families loyal to the British Government. Even during the famine, there was an unseemly exhibition of imperial pomp of the British. The attitude of the British was entirely imperialistic, but it led to the people of the educated middle class to start revolting. They began showing their inner anguish against feudal elements. Press restrictions also helped in kindling patriotic feelings among the Indian people.

Lord Ripon's Liberal Policy

Lord Ripon, who was a Liberal, came to India as the Viceroy in 1880. He adopted a new approach. He was in favour of establishing free press, encouraging education and giving maximum positions to Indians in administrative services. He believed not in repression but in progress achieved through love. As his intentions were honest, he followed a liberal tradition. Ripon brought the Afghan War to an end and recalled the British army. He promulgated the Factory Ordinance which provided amenities for child labourers as well as other factory workers. The Press Ordinance was withdrawn. Attention was given to primary education. Following the report of the Hunter Commission, educational institutions started getting grants. Instead of government control, a beginning was made to provide education through private institutions. The issue of moral education was also raised and most of the recommendations of the Commission were accepted. But after that, Ripon left.

Ripon played an important role even in the field of local self-government. He desired that there should be the minimum government interference in the administration at the local self-

government level. But in Great Britain, everyone with an imperialistic attitude had started opposing all such good measures and Ripon also had to face humiliation because of persons like Albert. The British bureaucracy was opposed to all the good actions of Ripon, with the result that Ripon was called back.

Lord Curzon's Disastrous Policy

Lord Curzon came to India as the Viceroy in 1899 and remained here till 1905. He was a capable person but a staunch imperialist. He rejected the demand by the Indian people for responsible government, ignored the Indian National Congress and also rejected the promises given by Ripon. He did introduce reforms in the administrative system, but for strengthening the imperialist domination in India. He was bitterly against nationalist leaders.

As far as the internal reforms were concerned, he improved the administrative machinery. He used to gather essential material for himself through committees and commissions, and also took lot of trouble himself. He evinced administrative alertness and reduced the element of delay in taking action. He adopted a new policy to combat famine and paid attention to land revenue and other related problems. Cooperative societies were established and the Railway machinery and its management were improved. There was improvement in the police department also and the police force was enlarged. An Intelligence Department was set up to keep a watchful eye on the freedom movement.

An ordinance was promulgated in 1904 for the protection of ancient monuments. He took personal interest in the affairs of the historical buildings at Agra and the Ajanta Caves. An ordinance regarding the Calcutta Municipal Corporation was passed in 1899. Curzon also paid attention to public education. In September, 1901, he organised a big conference at Simla where a large number of proposals pertaining to education were accepted and secondary education was also streamlined. New schools were opened and

teachers' training courses were started. Curzon's educational policy was opposed because he wanted to bring the educational institutions under stricter governmental control. Gopal Krishna Gokhale criticized the Education Bill which was introduced in 1903, because in his view, through that Bill, the universities were being sought to be converted into government departments. Curzon could not determine the goal of education, but he was successful in the matter of organisation and administration in the field of education. The intelligentsia openly opposed this policy. Antagonising intelligentsia is always bad, even though by power and brute force authorities may suppress that section of people for the time being. But in the long run, it is the intelligentsia that wins.

The revolutionary and nationalists movements were gaining momentum in the country. The Indian National Congress too was becoming more militant and combative day by day and Bengal was the hub of all those activities. Bengal had become something like a pain in the neck of the British Empire. Hence, Curzon prepared a plan for the partition of Bengal against which there was very strong protest in Bengal and in the whole country. According to Curzon's plan one part of Bengal was being joined with Assam and the other part was being so formed as to reduce the Bengali speaking people into minority. One part was to have a Muslim majority. Thus, Curzon wanted to contain the nationalist movement by creating walls of communal dissensions. Meanwhile differences arose between Curzon and General Kichner and Curzon had to return to his country.

Curzon had been appointed the Governor-General and Viceroy twice, but the second time he could not complete his full term as he had to resign in 1905. The popular demand of not permitting the partition of Bengal was accepted. Curzon was opposed to this demand. He acted in pursuance of only one objective of making all possible attempts to put the British power in India on permanent footing. In order to attain that objective, he concentrated all power in himself. He controlled the smallest and the most ordinary matters

in administration. But Curzon had to be only disappointed because of his inability to read the writings on the wall.

True character of Local Self-Government and other Reforms

After 1857, administrative reforms were introduced from time to time. Legislatures were formed and also expanded. A direct electoral system was adopted. But all those measures aimed only at strengthening the British rule in India. In 1909, Morley, the Secretary of State for India, said in British Parliament that he was not ready to move even a little finger for the objective of setting up a constitutional form of government in India. Not only that, separate voting rights were also granted to the Hindus and the Muslims. Communal electorates were created. A system of limited and discriminatory franchise was adopted. The result of all this was that the national movement was intensified and the policy of repression and reforms failed.

The Muslim League was established in 1906 and the constitutional reforms of 1909 aimed at making the Muslims well-disposed towards the British rule. It was a blow for the moderate political groups. The people of India were regarded as unfit for a democratic system and a representative form of government. The policy of class distinctions was adopted and it aroused disenchantment among the Indians. The moderates started losing their ground and finally, an agreement was reached between the two groups. With the passing away of Gokhale, Dadabhai Naoroji and Pherozeshah Mehta, the influence of the moderates was on the wane and the Indian National Congress, which had split in 1907, was reunited. Tilak and Annie Besant made a demand for self-government. Many groups were organised and the Home Rule Movement also became active.

About the same time, the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League came to an understanding whereby the two parties prepared a constitutional plan for the future. One great mistake

which had a historical implication was the acceptance of communal representation by the Indian National Congress. On August 20, 1917, Montague, the Secretary of State for India, acceded in British Parliament that self-governing administrative bodies would be gradually developed in India with a view to establish a responsible government in course of time. Through this declaration, the people of India had been given an assurance and for the fulfillment of that objective, the principle of gradually accommodating the maximum numbers of Indians in every government department was adopted. It was declared that responsible government would be introduced in India step by step, and for that purpose, India would be granted the opportunity of self-rule. That objective would be attained through a gradual process. The British government would take necessary decisions from time to time for fulfilling those ideals. In pursuance of these principles, a resolution, based on the Montague-Chelmsford Report, was passed in British Parliament in May 1919. According to that resolution, the form of self-government, the functions of the Governor-General, separation of Central and Provincial subjects, Central Legislative Assembly etc. were provided for. This was an important step in the direction of administrative reforms, but even that promise was incomplete. The political conditions in the country were not favourable to the acceptance of these proposals. The expectations of the people at the end of the first World War were not fulfilled.

Birth of the Congress and the Impact of various Reforms

It was with the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1855 that the nationalists movement got organised on a country-wide scale. The alien rule was having an adverse effect on the people of India all along. It was an imperialistic power that always resorted to exploitation. The British rule was the rule of an uncontrolled bureaucracy. The cultural awakening in the country was also accompanied by political awakening. Western ideas and western education attracted the attention of the nation towards freedom and liberation. The country got acquainted with the French Revolution

and the democratic ideas as well as the nationalist ideology of Mazzini and Garibaldi which strengthened the nation's desire to mobilize itself to move along the same lines. The public spirited men from the intelligentsia concentrated their thoughts on national welfare. As a result of exploitation, India's economic structure had weakened. The export of raw materials from India which was worth rupees Rs. 60 crores in 1858 had gone up to Rs. 213 crores within 40 years. That export was raised with a view to capture world market for Great Britain and ruin India's trade prospects. During the tenure of Cornwallis, a class of zamindars and exploiters, because of its own vested interests, stood by the alien rulers in exploitation of the people. Apart from that, economic changes also created a psychological climate for social change. Leaders from all sections of society belonging to all religions came forward to bring about social change. They aroused a new consciousness among the people by bringing about changes in social customs. Middle and lower middle classes of society were influenced by the nationalist currents and along with organizational and ideological consciousness also mingled political consciousness. Educated youth were unable to find good jobs despite their qualifications. That they were Indians was their fault and hence, they could be employed only at lower levels. All higher positions were meant for the Englishmen or their faithful Indians.

The youth of the country worked for the national cause with firm determination. Means of transport were also gradually increasing. Post and telegraph services had also started functioning which became instrumental in bringing about a sense of unity among the people. The coordination of governmental functioning helped in the regulation of political unity as well.

After 1858, the number of daily newspapers as well as weekly and monthly journals swelled. They provided political education to the masses and guided them in their hours of happiness and misery. They adopted a nationalistic outlook, created a sense of discernment in politics and aroused among the people an awareness about the attainment of their rights. Because administrative decisions were

not in national interests, they led to a widespread sense of frustration and in turn, national unity and organisation were strengthened.

The Indian National Congress gradually became a focal point for the intellectuals. This organisation, which had followed the path of appeasement and supplication so far, started becoming assertive. Although it was founded by Mr. Hume, he could not remain in control of the organisation for long. He had to leave India to return to England. To start with, the Congress was a reformist body which had been strongly influenced by leaders like Surenderanath Banerjea, Umesh Chandra, Gopal Krishna Gokhale etc. who were convinced about attaining their objective of freedom through constitutional means. In the early days, this organisation had confined its activities to seeking for Indians government jobs and administrative reforms. It believed that the interests of great Britain and India coincided with each other. But that was not the thinking of the common people.

Between 1905 and 1920, radicalism also grew in India. The radical nationalists were considered of aggressive temperament. This radical campaign with the Congress was led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak who considered freedom his birth right. There were also stray attempts to organise revolutionary movements in various places. The radical movement gathered momentum also due to the fact that the demands of the people were being consistently rejected by the Government. After their return from England people like Lala Lajpat Rai had realized that neither the citizens of Britain nor their Parliament had any time to understand the problems of India.

Instead of making appeals and submitting petitions, the policy of confrontation and endeavour came into force, because in lieu of bread, the British had always been giving stones. The radicals worked to fight against those conditions. There was of course the prevailing economic dissatisfaction. In addition, the British attitude of total disregard for the Indian people during the hard times of famines etc. was to give them further shocks. The feeling of self-

respect among the nationalists provoked them to struggle on their own. The 1905 plan of the partition of Bengal drove them to take to the path of confrontation.

In the meantime, in 1894, Italy was defeated by a small African country, Abyssinia, and in 1905, Japan won in a war against Russia. That aroused the faith of the people in the power of Africa and Asia and it caused a set-back to the general belief in the European supremacy.

This radical movement was kindled by self-confidence. Leaders like Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh and Lala Lajpat Rai were at the helm of that movement. Tilak not only spoke of freedom as his birth right, he also said that he would attain it. These leaders were speaking what the thinking people of the country desired and the people had abounding faith in their leaders. The Swadeshi Movement was started and the question of launching Civil Disobedience Movement was also raised. The radical movement was not merely an ideological movement, but the national leaders were organising the movement in their own respective regions. Even though the radicals remained out of the Indian National Congress from 1907 to 1916 because of mutual differences, they arrived at a compromise in 1913. Those leaders even went to jails to defend their ideology. On the other hand, they raised the cry of nationalism through their revolutionary, courageous activities which included activities aimed at the uplift of the downtrodden.

The Indians co-operated with the British during the first World War, but they were rewarded with the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. However, the Russian revolution inspired a new sense of awareness among the Indian people and it had a boosting effect on the nationalist movement. In return of co-operating with Britain during the War, India got a reign of terror. But in spite of all that, the intellectuals and the common people of India never accepted defeat. Even in their disheartening moments, they spread the message of the hope.

Internal situation of the Country

India was defeated in the armed revolt against the British rule in 1857. If the ideals cherished at heart are pure, there can be scriptural support for the attainment of those ideals. Sacred ideals are attained not with the force of arms, but of scriptures. The defeat of 1857 filled the minds of the people with stupefaction and disappointment, but it disheartened the people only momentarily. The period following the first war of 1857 was kindled by the awakened hope and was explicit with the language of faith. Scriptures are not merely treasured knowledge and science, but they are the *mantras* born through experience. That may not have been the age of progress from the scientific point of view, but every individual and every section of society, whether progressive or conventional or opportunistic, had been devoted to resurrection. The past became frame of reference for the present. The people were marching ahead with determination to build the future of India. Everyone aimed only at the campaign of public welfare and public good and freedom from physical and material constraints. It was the period of excellence in every field.

That period was marked by the presence of the people inspired by ideals, and all of them were idealists. Even the people with vested interests dared not talk against idealism. Even those who talked irrelevant things and indulged in all types of activities, created an impression of attaining their selfish motives in the guise of idealism. Whether they were Vaishnavites or Vedantists or pluralists, all of them were totally devoted to their ideals. Such a period of idealism marked with some objective, comes but rarely in the history of a nation.

Govind Ballabh Pant was born in an age when the country was on the verge of launching a mighty campaign. He gave an indication of the path he was to follow at the session of the Indian National Congress held in Kashi in 1905. He emerged as a streak in the Congress but through his service and endeavour, grew up into a national figure devoted to public welfare.

II

CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

PANDIT GOVIND BALLABH Pant was born a century ago at Almora located amongst the beautiful Himalayas. He was the jewel of an extremely learned family of Pandit Jaidev Pant which had migrated there from Maharashtra. This family had settled down in Almora in the 11th century.

All have very old family history. But the fact that any family should have an unbroken record of its influence, reputation and renown from the 11th century till today is indicative of an extraordinary dignity. There were four lineages in the family of Pandit Jaidev Pant. Among them was the Bhavdas family and Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was a brilliant son of that family.

In medieval ages, association with royal court used to be the source of prestige and honour to an individual. In spite of the association with the royal court, lack of virtue never used to bring honour to the individual. It is the virtues of an individual that make him a celebrity. Pandit Pant's family too was reputed and it had long standing relations with the rulers and administrators of the region. The members of the family not only became administrators in the royal court, but also became adept in many fields, one surpassing the other. Whether they were astrologers, priests conducting religious rites, men of learning or *vaidyas* - they were all well-versed in scriptures and adorned their family.

For the past nine hundred years, the family has continued to have its influence from the royal court to public life. Irrespective of the

rule and the ruler, the state and the circumstances, the great renown and sway of the Pant family on the region continued to remain the same at all times.

Pandit Kamala Kant was Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant's great grandfather. He held political positions with important public contacts during the British and the preceding Gorkha rule. He had five sons and the fourth son was Ghananand Pant. Govind Ballabh Pant was his grandson. Ghananand Pant's maternal grand parents lived in Kunalata on Berinag road about 32 miles from Almora. He was a learned man with a good character. He was well-versed in Sanskrit and Hindi. He was a known figure in the field of religious discourses and was an expert in conducting religious rituals. Earlier he was a senior official at the Government tea garden near Naukuchia lake. But that tea garden was abandoned because it was not productive and he had to come to Kunalata to live with his maternal grand parents. Shri Ghananad Pant had three children - Narottam Pant, Manorath Pant and Hari Pant.

Pandit Manorath Pant was born 11 years after the freedom struggle of 1857. He had acquired knowledge of Sanskrit and Hindi during his stay with his father, at Kunalata.

In the medieval period, the practice of child marriages was in vogue. This was done with a view to protect the dignity of the family and the sanctity of character and very often little girls were married off while they were still in their tender age. Children were often married by the time they were ten years old and at times, the girls were married while they were still infants. While fixing a marriage, the honour of the family was taken into account and the calculation of the astrologer used to be a deciding factor.

Pandit Manorath Pant was married to Gobindi, the daughter of Chief Revenue Officer, Pandit Badri Dutt Joshi. Pandit Manorath Pant was a righteous Brahmin with a quiet temperament. Pandit Joshi was also a renowned figure of that region. In his time, he was like a pillar for the ruling authority and for the society.

At that time Sir Henry Ramsay was the Commissioner of the Kumaon region. He was the highest administrator of Kumaon region for 14 years, enjoying full administrative power in the area under his jurisdiction. He was regarded as the King of Kumaon. His rule was unbridled. Being a distant and lonely area, Kumaon had been declared as being beyond the jurisdiction of the law of the land. It was ruled according to two wishes of Henry Ramsay. His command alone was the law. He was a dictator, an administrator and all in all in the Kumaon region in the truest sense.

During the first war of 1857, he allowed no harm to come to the British and their power. He had been very helpful in the spread of Christianity. During those troubled times, he gave full support to the British rule and had helped the propagation of the Christian faith, and therefore, he enjoyed overweening power in that area. Nobody had the courage to go against him. He was also a cousin of Lord Dalhousie. People were afraid of him both in family matters as well as in administrative affairs. He was an extremely strict administrator and extremely shrewd in pushing forward the British interests. Before the British rule, Kumaon was ruled by Gurkha regime which was very cruel, inhuman, exploitative and tyrannical. Compared to that, Ramsay had political expediency and generosity and therefore, people also respected him. He was an uncompromising Englishman and knew how to get his work done by hook or crook, and hence, as a bureaucrat, felt no hesitation in mixing with village folks in their meeting places.

He was adept at winning over those people by speaking the local dialect and participating in their customs and rituals. He used to take keen interest in social activities and also kept himself informed about such occasions by remaining in the midst of those people. On such occasions, he used to get the information about persons who exercised influence in society and by his efficient handling used to make them his favourites.

In medieval India, close contact with the ruling authority was a stepping stone for an individual to gain respect. That is why almost

all powerful people who aspired prosperous life and fame, desired to be associated with the government. In those days it was impossible to dream of social existence without having contacts with the government. Ramsay picked out such people and kept close contacts with them and also appointed them in high positions. Because of such people, public at large was beginning to have faith in an alien government and through such people, Ramsay also carried out some economic and social reforms in public interest so that the public could have greater faith in the government's intentions. In Kumaon, Ramsay's contribution consisted in land reforms, improvement in land revenue system, weights and measures etc. He favoured settling minor disputes in front of the people. He was not only an administrator in Kumaon, but also a leader in public life.

Pandit Badri Dutt Joshi was Ramsay's discovery. He had administrative competence, judicial efficiency and the capacity of a clever organiser. Among Ramsay's assistants, Pandit Joshi was given special regard. His ancestors too had been in high positions as administrators, ministers, Dewans etc. His father, Pandit Trilochan Joshi was a Dewan under the Gorkha regime and was made the Chief Revenue Officer with the establishment of the British rule. He had been extremely close to Ramsay. So long as he was alive, no one could establish himself in the British circles as he did. He was an impressive figure and a renowned person. His house was the center of all kinds of activities of sports, music and dance. He was an aristocrat in the real sense of the word. However, he was not merely an aristocrat, but he also made special contributions in the field of social work. Kumaon region was indebted to him for providing the facilities, from drinking water to education. He was instrumental in the construction of temples, libraries, dharamshalas etc., in that region.

Pandit Manorath Pant's marriage was the meeting of two reputed families which enhanced their social power. Even though he was married at the young age of about ten years according to the prevalent practice, his father-in-law asked him to live in his house

since there were no educational facilities in the village. He got Pandit Manorath Pant educated, and because of his influence, got him a government job as *Alahmad*. While he was still with his in-laws, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was born at the ancestral village of Khunt. Although he was born at Khunt, from the point of view of education, training and everything else, the house of his maternal grand parents was his proper home. Due to the shifting administrative headquarters after 1890, his father Pandit Manorath Pant used to be transferred to places like Bandi, Kashipur, Haldwani etc. After being permanently posted at Kashipur, he expired at the age of just 45 years. He died of cholera. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was greatly influenced by maternal grand parents, grand father and his mother, because it was under their protection that he was born, studied and grown and became a worker devoted to activities for social good. Pandit Manorath Pant had a daughter before the birth of Govind Ballabh Pant.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was born at Khunt on *Bhadrpad* 16 Saka, 1809, or *Ananta Chaturdashi*, *Vikram Samvat* 1944. The date according to the Christian calendar was August 30, 1887. But his birthday is celebrated on September 10, because the Hindu date keeps changing in lunar months. In 1946, his birthday was celebrated at Lucknow with much fanfare when he became the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh for the second time. That day, by a coincidence, it also happened to be an *Ananta Chaturdashi*. Hence for the sake of convenience, 10th September came to be accepted as his date of birth.

Even though he was born at Khunt and took steps for economic and social amelioration of Khunt, he was never able to go there throughout his life although that village was only eight miles from Almora across the Kosi river. In childhood, his name used to be Thappa which means a wall painting. It was not for nothing that he had been given that name. Whenever he saw anything, like a mural, he used to go on staring at it in the same pose and with the same expression and draw it in full detail. That name reflected his personality. Pandit Pant's primary education was at the house of his

maternal grand parents, and he was also initiated there. After the sacred thread ceremony, his name was registered in the Primary section of the Ramsay College when he was 10 years old.

Pantji was a bright student. Even though due to circumstances at home, he was not able to reach his school on time, he possessed sharp intelligence. He was very good in mathematics and English. A grammarian of Nesfield's stature, had highly praised his bright qualities. Pantji's memory was very strong and extraordinary. What he read used to be imprinted in his mind and he used to promptly translate his thoughts into action. He forged ahead only on the strength of uninterrupted action and exceptional talent. He was also very fond of wandering at places and horse-riding. He used to go walking to faraway places in the company of his friends. Though he never participated in sports, but he was fond of watching them with great spirit.

Today, it is generally believed that if boys are married while they are still studying, marriage becomes an impediment to their studies. But in those days, marriages were fixed at very young age and often when the children were still innocent and such persons managed to be in high positions in all fields and used to be men of great character. When Pantji was 12 years old, he got married according to the wish of his maternal grandfather to Ganga Devi, the daughter of Pandit Bala Dutt Joshi. His maternal grandfather died soon after that. His death affected the whole family. Even though the education at school and college had its impact in the character building of a person, it is the atmosphere in the family and society in which an individual lives and the conditions in the neighbourhood that have a greater impact on him. The atmosphere in the house of the maternal grand parents and the local conditions prevailing at that time had a deep impact on Pantji's personality.

While Pantji's formal education at school continued, a new wave of awareness was beginning to rise in the peaceful social life of Almora. Few social reforms had been taking place under the British rule and Kumaon was also coming into contact with the

Western culture. At the same time, the waves of social and religious revolutions and cultural awakening in the country were also beginning to reach that area. In those days, Swami Dayanand Saraswati was leading the religious and social revolution in North India. His stay at Kashipur for several months had its impact on this area.

In this area, because of poverty and lack of education, Christian missionaries had tempted the backward sections of society to change their religion and Christianity had spread. Swami Dayanand Saraswati had come to counteract that influence with his Vedic mission. The Arya Samaj gave rise to a new awakening in the region. The result was the moral ban against such conversions and several social evils like prostitution etc. The Arya Samaj spread the feeling of patriotism and inculcated love for India and Indian-ness in the minds of the people. The great leader Lala Lajpat Rai carried out relief work in this area which was afflicted with famine and also supported the purification campaign. Swami Vivekanand also raised the flag of *advaita* signifying the Hindu religion and brought among the people a sense of self-knowledge. Through the establishment of Ramakrishna Mission, the consciousness about spiritualism and service of the mankind was awakened among the people. In this protective Himalayan region, the Upanisadic culture came alive once again. When Pantji was still a boy, the society around him had already been influenced by all these things. Swami Satya Dev Parivarajaka also had returned from America by that time and had launched a vigorous campaign for radical social reforms. He was a vanguard of in this region where three streams of Sanskrit, Hindi and patriotism had mingled together. Pantji was greatly influenced by all these factors.

The *Almora Akhbaar* which was launched in 1871, had brought about new awakening in this region. This paper, published from this backward area, succeeded to arouse new vigour and consciousness among the youth. Apart from that, because of the growing contacts with the outside world, the papers like *Bharat Mitra*, *Bangavasi* etc. also awakened new political and social consciousness in the area.

At the time when Pantji was still studying, the prevailing social conditions were very strange. All kinds of frustrations, social evils and merry-making were prevailing in the society. Forces to fight those evils were no doubt beginning to make themselves felt, but people in that remote and quiet region were afraid of politics and considered it sinful even to talk about it. In such a situation, Pantji passed his High School examination from the Ramsay College in 1903 securing a First class. His was the third name on the list of students who had passed with distinction.

Pantji had always concentrated his attention on fighting against social evils. When he was studying in 11th standard, the renowned Congress Leader, Vishnu Narayan Dar arrived at Almora for treatment of tuberculosis. He was one of the foremost politicians of the country. Pantji got in touch with him. They had long discussions on the conditions prevailing in the country and society and on politics. This interaction broadened the horizons of Pantji's mind. During his student days, Pantji did not study the political and social conditions merely as an individual, but whenever he got an opportunity, he would also join in group activities. He was a member of the Happy Club where discussions and exchange of ideas on various burning topics used to take place. At those meetings, Pantji used to present his point of view very logically as an effective speaker. He had a heart attack as early as 1904, but still he passed his Intermediate examination in second class. His number was 20th in the whole Province, which entitled him to a monthly scholarship of twenty rupees. Even though his family was not in favour of his going for further studies in view of his ill health, he decided to go to Allahabad for that purpose. Thus, this simple-hearted young man from the Himalayas reached Allahabad, the sacred Prayag, for his higher studies.

Education at Allahabad and Popular Support

This *Sanatani* young man, devoted to regular recitation of the *Gayatri Mantra* and to morning and evening *poojas*, migrated from the quiet Uttarkhand to Prayag, the modern city of north India, the

city which was ancient but absolutely modern at the same time. And he had gone there to pursue his studies. The culture of the mountain peaks started traversing the unnoticeable distance of the new awakening of the flat land of the confluence of the sacred rivers. Thin streams of the rivers flowing through the mountains stretch themselves so wide when they reach the flat land. Pantji realized this wonder of nature at Allahabad and he also realized that the cool breeze of his region became so hot and scorching as it descended on the plains.

The glory of Prayag is not for it being the seat of learning but as a place of pilgrimage. But in those days, after Bengal, Allahabad was the most important centre of modern education. Through its university, Allahabad has made great contribution in the field of modern knowledge, education and training. At that time, Allahabad was bringing together Indians through the modernism of the Western civilization. In those days, it was not only Indian scholars who studied at our universities. Foreign scholars were also found there in large numbers. At that time, large number of scholars of national and international repute used to teach at the Allahabad University. Studying at the Muir College at Allahabad was a matter of great importance. A large number of great scholars used to gather there. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant also joined this college.

Teachers in those days were not mere treasure-houses of knowledge and learning, but they left their impress on the life of the student. Universities sought the co-operation of many respected personalities of society and did not consider it an impediment in its autonomous status. Great men of society also pursued their scholarly interests through the services they offered to the Universities. Though the atmosphere of Allahabad was new for Pantji, it was favourable to his health and mental state. When he joined the college, professors like Cox, Rendal, Jennings were on the staff, and the great figures like Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Motilal Nehru, Sir Sundar Lal, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Satish Chandra Bannerjee etc. were devoted to the service of society in Prayag. Even in the field of Law, they enjoyed a national status.

Pantji got his accommodation at the McDonald Hindu Hostel. Pandit Malaviya had contributed a great deal towards building up that Hostel. Among Pantji's colleagues was Pandit Har Govind Pant and other students, who hailed from the same area.

The nation was passing through a terrible phase at that time. The country was under the aegis of Lord Curzon's rule. Lord Curzon who believed in concentration of authority, was a learned controller and a respectable administrator. He had tightened his girdle in all possible manner to consolidate the British rule in India and he was trying his utmost to see that not only did the British rule continue its sway in India, but its hold and influence grow stronger. The Government made a declaration about the partition of Bengal on July 20, 1905. Entire country rose in protest, to the extent that even the loyal Indians were unhappy about it and they were anguished on it. It was only at that time that the idea of Swadeshi started occupying the minds of the people. Those who were so far only talking about nationalism, social uplift and Indianness now came out openly for the sake of their ideals. Indian public launched a full-blooded fight against the partition of Bengal, but Lord Curzon considered the people of this freedom-loving ancient country servile to Britishers. Even in the face of their mass protests, Lord Curzon did not give in. On October 16, 1905, he partitioned Bengal and created a new province in the shape of East Bengal.

At that time, Bengal was the centre of renaissance and national thinking. The entire nation was agitated on this partition. The anguish of Bengal aroused the sentiments of the whole country. That day, all activities in the country came to a standstill. People took a vow to reunite Bengal.

In the last week of December that year, the Congress session was held at Banaras, which was presided over by Gopala Krishna Gokhale. He was the leader of the moderates in the Congress and Tilak was the leader of the radical group. That session began in an atmosphere of great tension. Among the most decisive sessions of the Congress, this session too is historically important. At this

session, Gokhale also levied a scathing attack on the British policy of repression and believed that the whole country owed a debt to Bengal, because that particular political event had given the nation strength to awaken. The curse of the Bengal Partition turned out to be a blessing in disguise for the country.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant attended that session as a volunteer. He saw one of the most ancient cities of India where congressmen had come from different parts of India. He thus became aware of the vastness of the country. The tradition and the family to which Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant belonged and the atmosphere in which his life was spent could not permit him to be a revolutionary. Tradition and progress are determining factors in the life of such persons. He had learnt that basic lesson right from his childhood. Born in a highly respectable family which had close associations with the administration, he was the supporter of the movement of public good through social service.

Among the renowned leaders of India of that age, this particular quality was found in Gopala Krishna Gokhale who was wedded to the ideal of the attainment of independence through constitutional means and strength of character. He was greatly influenced by him. He was in contact with Pandit Malaviya, who was a matchless scholar devoted to Indian ideals, great supporter of Indian way of life, and dedicated to the cause of freedom. He had his impact on Pantji, who accepted Pandit Malaviya's approach through Gokhale. In 1907, Gokhale came to Allahabad where at a meeting presided over by Pandit Motilal Nehru, he exhorted the youth to come forward and render selfless service to the country. Pantji was highly impressed by the brilliance of both Gokhale and Malaviya.

In 1908, Kumbh Mela (fair) was held at Allahabad. This fair gives the vivid picture of eternal and ancient India. Saints and sages from all over the country arrive at this fair. All types of gymnasia are found there on that occasion. And in those days, Kumbh Mela used to be an auspicious occasion for economic welfare. Pandit Pant did not merely witness the Mela, but also actively participated in it. The

Kumbh Mela is not just a great auspicious occasion for the *sadhus and sanyasis* and the religious people to bathe at the confluence of the sacred rivers, but it also provides a medium for the propagation of new ideas. It was a great sacred occasion of national importance in ancient India for the progress and public welfare. In those days, all social organisations offered some services for the Kumbh Mela which also provided a platform for propagating their ideas. The Indian National Congress also spread its ideas and organised meetings there. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant also delivered a spirited speech in the interest of the nation, with the result that the Principal of the Muir College, Mr. Jennings, debarred him from appearing for the final examination on the ground that he had delivered a seditious speech.

In that extremely difficult situation, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya helped Pantji and warned the Principal about taking legal action. Sir Sundar Lal and Professor Cox of international repute also helped him so that along with him other debarred students were also allowed to appear for the examination. He got this punishment for revealing truth from the Congress platform, but because of the intervention by some renowned persons, he did not waste his year.

That very year, the Law College of the Allahabad University was established. It was the advanced form of the Law Department of Muir College. R.K. Sohrabji, India's renowned legal luminary, was the Principal of the new Law College and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Pandit Motilal Nehru etc. were the professors. Pantji's colleagues at the Law College were Acharya Narendra Dev, an early advocate of socialism in India, Dr. Kailash Nath Katju who was India's reputed freedom fighter and jurist, Shri Fazl Ali who was a jurist as well as a freedom fighter, Shri Har Govind Pant who was a freedom fighter and the Vice-Chairman of the U.P. Legislature and many others. Pantji was fortunate to have as his colleagues at the Law College such luminaries who have left an indelible impression on Indian history.

Pantji was getting his education and training at Allahabad for which he himself made the financial provision. He was already receiving the government scholarship of Rs. 20/- per month. He also started giving a private tuition in 1908. This indicated his principle of self-reliance. And it was not an ordinary tuition he was giving. His student was Shiv Prasad Gupt of Raja Moti Chand's family. Without him the history of the Congress, of literature and education would not be complete. He was the founder of the newspaper *Aaj*, founder of the Kashi Vidyapeeth, Treasurer of the Indian National Congress and a veteran freedom fighter. By way of respect to his work, the nation had honoured him with the title of "Rashtraratna". Raja Moti Chand was a leading aristocrat of U.P. at that time, and Shiv Prasad Gupt whom Pantji had taught, turned out to be a revolutionary who sacrificed everything he had and whose only absorbing interest was the freedom of the country. That too was a matter of no small pride for Pantji.

Pantji received his education at Prayag and extended the horizons of his life and expanded his field of activity. He entered the Congress fold. At the same time, he established contacts with great nationalist forces of the country. The *Saraswati* was an outstanding journal of that time. It was edited by Acharya Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi. An article by Pantji was published in this journal during this period. He came into contact with Surendranath Banerjea, Lala Lajpat Raj, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Sir Sunder Lal, Rash Behari Bose, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Dinshaw Vachha etc. As a matter of policy, he followed the path of idealism and dedicated himself to the service of the nation. Along with this, he also practised music. He studied the works of Bankim Babu, John Stuart Mill, Macaulay etc. and equipped himself for his chosen path. Pantji topped the list of candidates at the examination. This was the background of his education at Allahabad. He not only stood first at the University examination, but was also fired by the firm resolve of emerging on the Indian horizon by his commitment to social and political life and dedication to duty.

III

LEGAL PRACTICE AND PUBLIC SERVICE

PANTJI APPEARED FOR his Law examination in 1909 and stood first. However, that same year, his first wife Ganga Devi died. Ganga Devi had shared ten years with him. At the young age of 23 years, he had to bear the shock of his wife's death. In the midst of this domestic trouble, he started his legal practice in 1910 at Ranikhet and Kashipur. He had a flourishing practice. Because of his impressive personality and legal expertise and a logical bent of mind, he acquired a status among the lawyers of those places.

Pantji's childhood was spent mostly with his maternal grandparents and he had his higher education at Allahabad. But in 1912, he joined his father Pandit Manorath Pant who was Revenue Collector at Kashipur. Pantji was very alert professionally and constantly purchased new books on the subject so that he remain abreast in his field. That was how he had a large collection of books in his house which he used to study and apply in his legal profession. He was an extremely self-confident and successful lawyer. He became such an established lawyer that during the last days of his professional career he used to earn up to Rs. one thousand a month. It was indeed a very big amount in those days.

His second marriage took place in 1912 at Almora. Even though he was personally unhappy about it but he had to submit to the pressure of his parents and relatives. While practising law, Pantji wore Khadi clothes and also a Gandhi cap. He had never been too fond of exotic food, but in the matter of chewing paan he left even the confirmed Banarasis far behind. He had hardly spent a little

time in happiness and comfort when his father passed away. His second wife bore him one child, but she too died in 1914. There was his widowed sister and widowed mother at home. The condition of the house was frightening and also painful for him. But he remained steadfast to his duty. His third marriage took place in 1916 with Kala Devi, daughter of Shri Tara Dutt of Kashipur. Pantji was 30 years old at that time. He had suffered so much of domestic misery and pain that a weaker person in his place would have just broken down. He had suffered shocks right from his childhood. But people of determination are always put to test by troubles and problems, bereavement and anxieties. Men who have conquered death are those who continuously march ahead with firm determination through series of blows and counter-blows. It was these factors that had shaped Pantji's character. He never grew indifferent to social work. This man, caught between his illness and sorrow, always showed path to the society.

Kashipur was aglow with social and political consciousness. Keshab Sen, Rabindranath Tagore, Vivekanand and other great figures from outside visited that city. Visits by other people also led to awareness in that region. Parivrajak Swami Satyadev aroused awareness among the people of this area. Literature, culture and religion have provided a background for Indian politics. In those days, people devoid of interest in literature, art and music were considered animals without tails. All people took interest in music and literature. They all had a burning passion to bring about social reforms.

Kashi Nagari Pracharini Sabha is a great institution that has led to literary and cultural awareness among people. It was through its efforts under the guidance of Malaviyaji that the Devnagari script was introduced in offices and people were given the optional right of submitting their applications in Hindi. Well-known people from all sections of society were keen to offer their services through that institution. Pantji had seen Gokhale being honoured by that institution and it was there that Lokamanaya Tilak had declared Hindi as our national language. The journal *Saraswati* was also launched

by the Nagari Pracharini Sabha and Pantji was eager to get his article published in that journal. Keeping in mind the aims of propagating his own language and working for social reform, Pantji established Prem Sabha in 1914 as a branch of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha, through which he recruited volunteers who also carried on nationalist activities through social reforms. Kashi Nagari Pracharini Sabha also provided ground to the Congressmen, the Arya Samajists, as well as revolutionaries to function along their own lines. The bureaucrats were irritated with this institution because they believed that in the name of literature and culture, it was carrying on nationalist propaganda. However, Pantji continued to keep his Prem Sabha going. Not only that, in subsequent years, he also became the President of the Kashi Nagari Pracharini Sabha and also guided its future activities that enhanced the glory of that institution in independent India. Whichever institution with which Pantji associated himself, he maintained lifelong association with it and gave his best to it.

Pantji helped in setting up a High School at Kashipur in 1914. It was the first High School of Kashipur. He named it Uday Raj Singh Hindu High School. He was also the Secretary of the Board of the High School. He was inspired to establish that High School by the Central Hindu College at Banaras which was the requital of his nationalist resolve. The High School at Kashipur followed that example. It was Pantji's aim to prepare a powerful band of students inspired by nationalist ideas so that in the process of being educated, they also acquired the ability of discharging their responsibilities towards society and the country.

In those days, every individual had in his mind the slogan "organisation is the power in Kali Yuga," which inspired everyone to be active. Pantji built contacts with all the great people of Kumaon and contributed to the establishment and growth of the Kumaon Parishad. Almost all the Kumaon leaders were associated with it. Its first meeting was held at Almora in 1916 during the Ramlila days. The problems of Kumaon were discussed during that meeting and the causes that afflicted the social life of Kumaon were identified.

IV

PANDIT PANT AND THE KUMAON PARISHAD

THE PROCESS OF political awakening in Kumaon also began with the establishment of the Kumaon Parishad. This was also the beginning of the fight against social evils. The system of forced labour of coolies and the problem of forests were particularly hindering the progress of the people of Kumaon. The Kumaon Parishad launched a strong protest against the system of forced labour. Stress was laid on this subject because it was suspected that it would evoke the harassed masses to co-operate. It was also expected that it would lead to the expansion of the Parishad since everyone was suffering and feeling insulted by that system. The Government officials functioning under this system were given the power to arrest anyone during their tours, no matter how big and important he may be. Any person so arrested was subjected to forced labour and had also to face insults and admonitions. During that period it was like living in hell for him. He had to live like a bonded labourer. Naturally, such a treatment was an open insult to self-respect and freedom of that individual. And it was certainly an insult to the society. Due to Pantji's organising capacity, all influential people of Kumaon got together. Pantji's ability to organise people was remarkable. The Parishad itself was its greatest evidence. In the Parishad, there were well-known persons like Pandit Prem Ballabh Pande, Shri Har Govind Pant, Pandit Badri Dutt Pande, Pandit Lakshmi Dutt Shastri, Thakur Mohan Singh Daramwal and Lala Chandra Lal Shah. By 1916, Pantji was already a respected leader of Kumaon even though there were several other leaders, much senior to him. But he had his own distinct personality. In the same year, Pantji was nominated a

member of the notified area of Kashipur and later the Chairman of its education committee. Through that position, he rendered widespread services in the field of primary education.

1916 is an important year in the history of the Indian National Congress. It was in this year the plenary session of the congress was held at Lucknow. The Congress had been divided into two groups during the Surat session in 1907. The two groups had been functioning as Moderates and Radicals. The Moderates believed in attaining the goal of self-rule by stages through constitutional means; because they had faith in love for freedom as well as sense of justice of the British people. The radicals favoured the attainment of that goal through struggle. The moderates were led by Gopal Krishna Gokhale and the Radicals by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal. In 1916, the two groups were reunited and they participated in the plenary session at Lucknow. That reunion infused new life into the Congress. This session of the Congress was held from 26th to 30th December and was presided over by Ambika Charan Majumdar. That session of the Congress had brought Tilak, Annie Besant, Lala Lajpat Rai, Surendra Nath Banerjea, C.F. Andrews and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi on the same platform.

Lokmanya Tilak declared in the midst of loud applause that the credit for forging unity in the Congress lay with the Lucknow session. The President, Shri Ambika Charan Majumdar, pointed out that the solution to the Hindu-Muslim problem was already found because both the communities had demanded India's freedom with one voice. The Congress and the Muslim League also held its united session at Lucknow which was attended by Jinnah. The moderate and the radical group of the Muslim League and the Congress came to accept the same ideology. The Congress accepted Mrs. Annie Besant's plan of Home Rule. Both Tilak and Jinnah supported Home Rule. They strengthened and propagated the idea.

Pantji attended the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress as a representative of the Kumaon Parishad which was

following the same line of action as the Congress. But by 1919, the Parishad came to be dominated by the Radicals.

Malviyaji did not attend that Congress session, because the Congress had made a compromise with the Muslim League. Later, that compromise formula came to be known as the 'Lucknow Pact' which, according to Malaviyaji, was anti-Hindu.

In 1915, Gandhiji had lost in the election for the membership of the Congress Subjects Committee but he was nominated to it by the Congress President. But this time, because of Tilak's effective handling, he was elected to the Subjects Committee. That way, Gandhiji, through his dedicated service, became the architect of the future of the Congress within four years.

Pantji was not active during that session. But he studied the entire situation very seriously, and assimilating within himself whatever he saw, consolidated his own political acumen and forged ahead on his chosen path of action.

BEGINNING OF POLITICAL CAREER

PANDIT GOVIND BALLABH Pant enriched his social and political life through the Kumaon Parishad. Although it was established with a view to promote development in the region, but it was not indifferent to politics. In those days, no social reform was possible without political discipline. The alien rule had reduced the people of India to the status of second class citizens and in this backward region, their condition was all the more difficult and uneven. The special feature of Indian society has been that in the field of politics, it has respected competence, merit and sanctity of conduct everywhere. In those days, it was necessary for an individual to be educated in order to attain leading position in politics or social reform or any such field. And he was not only expected to have education but also good character. Such people had to show the path to social uplift by imbibing good qualities and by dedicating themselves to the cause of public welfare.

Slavery is a contemptible blemish on the self-respect of human beings and it has been considered abominable in every field. The society of that period experienced this in every aspect of life from religion to daily living. People with good qualities not only help society to experience truth, but they also show way. He who regarded his own life, his family and his house as most important, was in good books of the Britishers. These people who attached importance to their own comforts and conveniences had to compromise their freedom. Those who wanted to serve society had to dedicate themselves to society. In order to obtain leadership, they had to

identify themselves with public. They had to forget their happiness and sorrow, pain and admonition but to think only in terms of people's happiness and welfare. A leader in those days was completely devoted to society and considered himself a unit. Such idealist leaders had emerged in large numbers in all fields. They enjoyed their own positions in political sphere.

Pantji was one of such dedicated *sadhakas*. He was a man with a basic sense of service. A leader in those days was never a burden on society, but he managed to have his own means for the upkeep of his family. That was the reason why so many people with sterling qualities like lawyers, medical practitioners, wealthy as well as men with pure heart and good qualities entered the political arena. In his own field, Pantji was one such person with these qualities. Service brings for one public support and dedication gives strength. Pantji was not a leader who loved solitude; but he was a devout ascetic who lived in the midst of people and served them. That was why he created his own public support in this field. He did not believe in becoming a leader through propaganda and support of the press. Rather, he was a leader who earned public support for himself by winning the hearts of the people by serving them.

Till 1926, the Kumaon Parishad alone was actively engaged in bringing about political awareness in this region. Then it merged with the Congress. In those days, all types of people could be found in society. Some of them were paid servants of the British and did not wish even to think against the British, because that servility brought them means to live in comfort and luxury and also earned them high positions in society and in administration. Such opportunistic people never allowed their individual interests to be jeopardized in any way. Then there was another group of people with their own inner strength and were totally devoted to their ideals. They were utterly unconcerned about the strength of their opponents. These people preferred to sacrifice their lives for the attainment of their ideals without bothering about their means. There was yet another group of people who thought about the conditions of times in totality. They knew their strength through which they acquired

greater strength. They created conditions whereby they could attain their ideals and by vanquishing their opponents, could start working in the interest of public welfare. Such people were successful in every field.

From this point of view, Pantji was neither a self-seeker nor a revolutionary. Rather, he was a man who had patience and inner strength. He was a man who transcended his times and followed a path of discretion. He was not a person to lose his sense of direction in the midst of strong currents of ideals and ideas. Instead, he was a person who adopted a natural and balanced approach. The Kumaon Parishad had in it people belonging to all types of ideologies. Gradually the nationalists and people sharing the Congress views, came to increasingly dominate the Kumaon Parishad. Pantji believed in the tradition of Gokhale and Gandhi. Because of his achievements, his preference for the middle path gradually dominated the Kumaon Parishad as well. The Parishad used to hold its annual sessions during which every thing from economic to political development was discussed and plans of action were chalked out.

The clear impact of politics was felt for the first time at the Kumaon Parishad's session at Haldwani when a resolution was passed to the effect that the Kumaon region should be brought on the same level of other regions from the legal point of view and should no longer remain at the mercy of administration. At the same time, problems relating to forced labour, forests etc., were also raised. These were the subjects that were the direct concern of the administration as well as public life. Pantji took part in this session and tried in an effective manner to make the people of Kumaon aware of these problems of the region and connect it with the political mainstream of the country. The impact of these attempts was so great that the Government was forced to appoint the Wildham Committee. Wildham was the Commissioner of Kumaon who had to make his own recommendation with regard to the system of forced labour. This session was held in 1918 and the Committee was also set up at the same time.

In 1919, Kumaon had to face a terrible famine during which, on behalf of the Bharat Scouts, Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru and Shri Ram Vajpeyi and on behalf of the Lok Seva Mandal, Lala Lajpat Rai rendered significant services to the afflicted people. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant also, together with other leaders and colleagues, jumped into the field to help the famine-stricken people with all the power at their command.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant chalked out a long term scheme to put an end to the horror of recurring famine conditions in that region. He set up a Khadi Bhandar in that region and propagated the idea of fruit cultivation with a view to provide employment opportunities to the poor people and the farmers. He also broadbased his activities by engaging himself in fighting social evils under the auspices of the Kumaon Parishad. Eradication of prostitution, female education and spread of education in general were the fields in which he made widespread contribution. By 1919, Pantji was considered one of the leading figures of Kumaon. By that time, he had become the leader not only of Kashipur, but of the entire Kumaon region. He was now one of the front-ranking leaders of Kumaon and a carrier of the Congress ideals. Along with Pandit Badri Dutt Pande, he represented Kumaon at the Amritsar session of the Indian National Congress.

The year 1919 is important not only in the history of the Indian National Congress but also in the history of the whole nation. The Congress had whole-heartedly helped the British Government during the first World War with the expectation that when the British emerged victorious, they would grant freedom to India. The leaders of the country were under the impression that because they were helping the British in their moment of crisis, they would grant the right of self-determination to India since they considered themselves the most civilized people in the world and were committed to peace and order. But the British intentions were altogether different. Those ideals were merely a pretense. At least they were not what they seemed.

In order to keep themselves firmly in power, the Rowlatt Act was passed in the British Parliament in February 1919. It was called the Montague-Chelmsford Reform. The Rowlatt Act was a terrible blow to India's freedom and India's right to self-determination. It was a planned conspiracy to keep the people of India in a state of subjugation by resorting to measures of repression and suppression against all principles of justice. The whole nation writhed in anger when the Rowlatt Act was passed. The radicals in the country were opposed to the deceptive manoeuvres of the British right from the beginning. But even those who were given to righteous thinking, could not bear that shock of betrayal. In order to give a just turn to that act of injustice, Gandhiji announced the launching of civil disobedience movement.

Gandhiji had emerged as a new leader who cherished the eternal Indian ideals and values. Gandhiji knew very well that truth and non-violence are the greatest human values through which life finds freedom from bondage. Mahavira and Buddha had successfully precised those principles on a countrywide scale. Gandhiji knew how Rama, without his chariot, had defeated Ravana riding the chariot, with force of Truth and defended freedom in the world. Gandhiji tried to extend his experiments with truth from the individual to the social level and announced the launching of the Satyagraha movement to protest against the humiliating Rowlatt Act.

Satyagraha is the test of the real nature of one's thoughts, wisdom and feelings. Through the sacred medium of fast and the power of prayer, the satyagraha was launched on April 6, 1919. Countrywide strike was declared. There were ruthless lathi charges and shootings all over the country. Unarmed people were wounded and many became martyrs as they fell victims to lathi blows and bullets, for fearlessly championing the cause of truth. It was the beginning of a non-violent mass movement on the Indian soil against the British who had won in the first World War with the help of arms.

Kumaon also marched forward in order to make its own contribution to this non-violent revolution. Even in that region, people rose to join the national struggle and Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant made a very rational speech against the Rowlatt Act at Kashipur and a resolution was unanimously passed demanding the immediate repeal of the Act.

It is essential to know the background of the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms. The Indian leaders declared that India should unconditionally help the British in the first World War. They had expected that in return, Great Britain would grant Dominion Status to India. This feeling was strengthened also because it was declared in the British Parliament on August 22, 1917 that Indians should be given increasing opportunities in every field of Administration and governance of their country and they should also be entitled to occupy high military positions by giving them some appointments in the army. It was proposed that the Secretary of State for India would visit India for that purpose to get first-hand information about the prevailing situation. Montague was the Secretary of State for India at that time. He came to India on November 10, 1917, to personally study the Indian conditions and met a cross-section of the people. Among the people whom he met were Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Annie Besant, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Montague published his Report after about eight months on July 8, 1918. A session of the Congress was held at Bombay under the Presidentship of Shri Hasan Imam to consider the details of that Report. During that session, the Congress expressed its total dissatisfaction and made a demand of complete self-determination.

At the same time, it was decided that an Indian delegation should go to England to acquaint the British Government with the real situation in India and bring it round to accept India's demand for self-determination. The moderates in the country, under the leadership of Surendranath Banerjea also met in Bombay. They decided that the political reforms which had been announced should be implemented and taking advantage of those reforms, India

should march ahead for the attainment of her goal of self-determination. While the moderates adopted such an attitude in November, the Congress session was held at Delhi in the last week of December. It was presided over by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. That session of the Congress outrightly rejected Montague's Report.

The British had emerged victorious in the war and hence they were walking on air. The Congress not only rejected that Report, but it also demanded representative or responsible governments at the provincial level. The British were under the impression that the Indians would eat an humble pie and accept whatever crumbs that were thrown at them, and those who did not accept, would face public humiliation. Two Committees were set up for the implementation of those Reforms. It was the function of one of those Committees to consider which subjects would be under the jurisdiction of the Governor and his Council and which subjects would be under the Governor and his Advisory Council. Both these Committees, though presided over by Lord Southborough, had both Englishmen and Indians as its members. But there were separate memberships for these committees. It was the responsibility of the second committee to decide the criterion for the franchise for the elections to the Central Legislative Assembly as well as the Provincial Legislatures. Richard Fedhan, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Chimanlal Setalvad were in the first committee, whereas, the second committee had Sir Malcolm Hague, Surendra Nath Banerjea, Srinivas Sastri, Lord Hailey etc.

Kumaon had been kept outside the purview of the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant consulted Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya and Pandit Motilal Nehru and tried to convince them that the Committee be persuaded to accept Kumaon as part of the plan of implementation of those Reforms. Pandit Pant succeeded in his attempts and it was decided to have one representative each from Nainital, Almora, Garhwal Districts for the Provincial Council. Pantji and his colleagues succeeded in their attempts towards bringing Kumaon into the mainstream of the United Provinces. Pantji was successful in getting a place for

Kumaon in the electoral process which in turn had its effect on society. The Kumaon Parishad selected its three representatives for the elections: Babu Mukundi Lal, a Barrister from Garhwal, Pandit Har Govind Pant from Almora and Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant from Nainital. The election campaign started with full swing. The Kumaon Parishad entered the election fray with the programmes of ending the system of forced labour, proper management issues like cottage industries etc.

The choice of Amritsar for the Congress session was to keep alive the feelings aroused by the campaign started by Gandhiji on April 6, 1919. Like in other parts of the country, in Amritsar too a strike was organised and a public meeting was held. The leader of Punjab, Dr. Kitchlew and Satyapal were sent behind bars. On April 11, there was firing on the people who had gone there seeking the release of their arrested leaders. The crowd turned violent. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Lt. Governor of Punjab, handed over Amritsar to the army.

On April 13, a public meeting was announced at Jallianwala Bagh to protest against those acts of repression. This Bagh, surrounded by high buildings on three sides, is linked by two or three narrow streets to other streets around. People gathered there and General Dyer ordered the British and Indian soldiers to fire at the unarmed crowd without giving them any warning. Nearly twenty thousand people had gathered there for the meeting. About two thousand shots were fired at the crowd from the machine guns which killed 379 innocent people and wounded about 750 persons. Martial Law was clamped on the city and there was a brutal reign of terror. Jallianwala Bagh became a turning point in the history of mass movement for independence which became a source of inspiration ever since. The Amritsar session of the Congress had to be planned to pay humble homage to that event of national awakening.

Pantji took part in the Amritsar Congress session which was held from December 27 to 31, 1919. That session was presided over by Pandit Motilal Nehru. He was of the opinion that even though the

Montague-Chelmsford Reforms were inadequate they should be accepted and by gaining power through them, the country should march ahead. However, Gandhiji had abandoned his plan to launch a non-cooperation movement. At the Calcutta session, the resolution regarding the non-cooperation movement and Khilafat movement had already been passed. The Nagpur session which was under the presidentship of Shri Vijaya Raghavacharya from December 23-26, 1920, had put its stamp of approval on it. The Nagpur session was a very decisive session. Tilak had passed away by that time. It was intended to win independence through the non-cooperation movement within a year. During that session, it was decided to conduct the proceedings in the national language instead of English, and a resolution about the reorganisation of Provinces on linguistic basis was also passed. The 'Tilak Swarajya Kosh' was also set up under the leadership of Gandhiji with the aim of collecting a fund of one crore rupees.

Both Lala Lajpat Rai and Chittaranjan Das were not in favour of the non-cooperation movement. They also opposed the non-cooperation resolution at Calcutta. There was no rancour of any kind in the minds of the people on both sides, but their approaches definitely varied. At the Nagpur session, the two groups had a serious exchange of views and churning of ideas. Ultimately, both the leaders not only expressed their acceptance of Gandhiji's views, but themselves brought in the resolution on the subject and supported it. In this session too Kumaon was represented by Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and Pandit Badri Dutt Pande.

Before the Nagpur session, a convention of the United Provinces Congress was held in November, 1920, during which it was decided to carry on the propaganda for the non-cooperation movement in Kumaon also. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Shraddhanand, the Ali Brothers, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Shiv Prasad Gupt etc. were present at that session. Kumaon was represented by Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant along with Barrister Mukundi Lal. In Kumaon also, because of his active involvement, the propaganda for non-cooperation movement was being carried on in full swing.

In protest against the decision in favour of fighting Council elections, voters were prevented from exercising their franchise. Pantji had been fighting the elections from Nainital as the representative of the Kumaon Parishad. Though a leader of the Parishad, Pantji was ideologically closer to the Moderates. Pantji was pitted against Rai Bahadur Shri Narayan Dutt Chhimwal. The Radicals within the Congress were boycotting the elections. The Rai Bahadurs enjoyed immense power in backward areas in those days and people regarded them with respect and awe. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant lost that election on December 4, 1920, by 33 votes.

However, Pantji was not at all disheartened by his first electoral defeat. That election was marked by quite a bit of high handedness and arbitrariness. In spite of everything, Pantji did not lose his interest in public service. Because of the lesson he learnt from his first defeat in an election and the training he got, Pantji never again lost any election in life. He won all through his life. He was a unique and accomplished person, who had the power to convert his defeat into victory.

After his electoral defeat, Pantji did not turn his face away from politics. He participated in the Nagpur session of the Congress as a delegate from Kumaon. Along with Pandit Badri Dutt Pande, he took Gandhiji's blessings for fighting against the system of forced labour. Pandit Badri Dutt had become very popular among his people because of his work and he made a direct assault on the system of forced labour. Pantji also organised a mammoth meeting for that purpose on January 13, 1921, which coincided with the *Makar Sankranti* day. While serving his people, he never bowed before British. As a result, he became the great leader of the people who showered love on him at all times.

Pantji had his own troubles. He was a fresh householder and he alone was the head of the family. He had to shoulder the entire responsibility of managing the household. Pantji had been a liberal so far, but after this incident, he was more inclined towards Gandhiji's line of thinking. This incident established a new political

standard in Kumaon. There were 15,000 persons attending the session and all condemned with one voice the Waldham Report. In that region where people used to tremble with fear at the sight of an Englishman, now they took a pledge to eradicate the system of forced labour which had been recognized by the administration.

As a result, the process of terrible repression began in Kumaon. Pandit Badri Dutt Pande and other leaders were arrested and section 144 was clamped on the cities. The Parishad called a convention to consider this situation. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant also took part in that session. It was resolved in that convention to halt the reign of terror, acquire agricultural land for the farmers with a view to get their co-operation and a demand was made to change the rules concerning the management of the forests. Pandit Badri Dutt Pande was tried for leading that campaign. Pantji was his advocate and as Pandit Badri Dutt Pande's lawyer, he was actively associated with that trial. The masses themselves rose in protest against the repressive measures of the Government and they started setting the forests on fire. The Government also hardened its attitude and became more aggressive. Whether it was the case of Thakur Mohan Singh Mehta or anyone else, as a lawyer, Pandit Pant always stood against the Government.

In 1920, Pantji became the Chairman of the Nainital District Board and the Kashipur Municipality. He improved the state of both these bodies and had a resolution passed for compulsory (primary) education. Pantji always wanted that the hardships of the people were removed with the help of available means. He always made his contribution for improving the management of education in this region, so that in days to come, Kumaon should produce such educated and competent young men who would easily shoulder their social responsibilities in future.

The affairs concerning forests had taken a violent turn and the government had started suspecting that the revolutionaries were behind that agitation. The Provincial Government had set up a Committee for hearing the cases of the hardships faced by the people.

The Government wanted Pantji and other leaders to give evidence before that committee, but Indra Lal Shah and the President of the Kumaon Parishad Pandit Har Govind Pant expressed their inability to give evidence before that sort of a committee. None of those three leaders went to give evidence before that committee in protest against the Government's policy of repression to curb the masses.

In December, 1921, Pantji became the President of the Kumaon Parishad held at Almora. Through this Parishad, Pantji attacked social evils like gambling, consumption of intoxicants etc. and appealed to the people that they should work unitedly in order to make progress and should themselves manage their own affairs and the developmental works of their villages. He appealed to them to form their own Panchayats. In the course of his speech, Pantji also made suggestions regarding the forests as well as other problems which were in the best interests of the people. The problem of the forests was a matter of life and death for Kumaon. Pantji knew this very well. At the same time, he was also a great advocate of spreading education and fighting against social evils for making progress. Pantji was well aware about the importance of forests in the life of that region. He submitted a memorandum in English about the forest problem which reflected his deep study of the problem and also presented the solution. He exercised tremendous influence over the masses of Kumaon. It was in such a situation that Pantji moved towards that point from which his field of activities started extending up to the provincial level.

Pantji was not a manoeuvring leader who would take long jumps. Rather, he was an indomitable wayfarer who proceeded in slow steps. After extending his field of service in Kumaon, he firmly planted his feet in the provincial politics. He was not also the type who would forget or leave behind the place of his inspiration while marching forward. He was a man who had taken a vow of eternally serving his people. He was a firm and impressive person. Hence, as provincial or a national leader, he never severed his connections with the region from where he hailed.

THE SWARAJ PARTY

IT IS BELIEVED that from 1920 till the attainment of Independence, the Congress has been moving on the axis of Gandhiji's ideas. But this does not mean that Gandhiji was a dictator in the Congress. There is no doubt about the widespread influence of Gandhiji's philosophy and ideals on the Congress. But there were also occasions when people had found Gandhiji seated sad and helpless on the stage during the proceedings of the Congress sessions. The Congress had always been a mass organisation belonging to varied ideologies and inspired by many ideals. But Gandhiji's ideological differences with C.R. Das or Pandit Motilal Nehru or Subhas Chandra Bose or Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru were clearly ignored. Even though Gandhiji was the moon in India's political firmament, quite often, brilliant satellites also had brightened the country and its people by their own lustre.

C.R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru exercised their influence on the country till 1927. Gandhiji desired to keep Indian politics alive through a saintly touch. He was launching the struggle for India's freedom by deploying new methods that were based on the achievements resulting from the experiments performed on the Indian soil over thousands of years. C.R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru were great patriots and were driven by a strong passion for freedom. They wanted to attain that objective by keeping politics separate from religious sentiments. But Gandhiji was committed to idealism in his thought, speech and deed. Pandit Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das were practical statesmen. Both of them advocated the use of the means best suited to the need of the time. They had faith not in the sanctity

of means but in the attainment of the objective. Those who wanted politics to exist independently, found Gandhiji's constructive programme prolonged and boring.

Gandhiji launched the non-cooperation movement. There were bonfires of foreign clothes all over the country. Government schools, colleges and offices were boycotted. Government servants resigned their jobs and non-cooperated with the Government. Thousands courted imprisonment. The tide of the non-cooperation movement spread throughout the country. Under such circumstances, on February 12, 1922, Gandhiji addressed a letter to the Viceroy, Lord Reading, giving him an ultimatum that within a week of the receipt of his letter, Viceroy should release all non-violent satyagrahis from prison, withdraw the restrictions clamped on the press and acknowledge the blunders it had committed in Punjab and concede all demands with regard to the Khilafat movement. These were the minimum demands and if they were accepted, the movement would be withdrawn. The Government rejected Gandhiji's demands.

Now Gandhiji was determined to conduct a full-fledged civil disobedience movement from Bardoli. But, in the meantime, terrible violence broke out in the Chauri Chaura Bazaar at Gorakhpur. The police resorted to brutal lathi-charge on a huge procession of unarmed, peaceful and non-violent men and women and a large number of people were mercilessly beaten up. The enraged crowds forced the police to flee. The entire police force sought protection inside the police station and the crowd then set the police station ablaze. Twenty nine constables and the sub-inspector of police were burnt alive inside the police station. Even before this, there had been 60 violent incidents throughout the country during the satyagraha. Unhappy over those incidents, Gandhiji withdrew the movement altogether.

It was for the sake of the ideal of non-violence that Gandhiji had withdrawn the non-cooperation movement. On the other hand, the urge to carry on the struggle had still not gone from the people's

minds. They were keen to continue the struggle whenever it was possible. Gandhiji was not in favour of the entry in the council, but both C.R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru considered it important to enter the Council and weaken the government from within and accepted the proposal to that effect. Both sides were inspired by patriotic feelings. Gandhiji was for a revolution from top to bottom, whereas, the other side wanted to strike only from the top. Gandhiji's path differed from theirs.

Both C.R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru believed in truth and non-violence. But Gandhiji's non-violence aimed at bringing about a change of heart of the enemy, while C.R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru accommodated even those people who resorted to violence under provocation. To both of them, even the Council entry was a form of non-cooperation with the Government. But Gandhiji was not at all willing to accept such a situation. C.R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru were exponents of popular feel. The Congressmen were increasingly leaning towards them. Ultimately, under the leadership of C.R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru, the Swaraj Party was formed within the Congress. Their influence continued to prevail in the Congress till 1927.

From the platform of Swaraj Party, the Congress started its attempts to fight for Independence on the constitutional front. Gandhiji suspended the satyagraha movement which was in full swing throughout the country. But Gandhiji did it, because he could not sacrifice his principles. Ideal alone was his strength and truth his support.

After the announcement of the withdrawal of the movement, the British Government arrested Gandhiji on March 13, 1922, and sentenced him to six year's imprisonment. The Congress was in a fix as the satyagraha was suspended. All that the Congress could do was to carry on the constructive programme and ply the spinning wheel. All those who had plunged into the Congress movement were not saints, but a great number of them had the burning passion for freedom in their hearts. The British were talking about constitu-

tional reforms through which alone these people wanted to destroy the Government by entering the legislatures. They wanted to obstruct the functioning of the Government through constitutional means and render it ineffective by their non-cooperation. This section of the people was led by Pandit Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das. But the number of those Congressmen was also not small who wanted to keep alive the inner urge of the people by following the path Gandhiji had shown even during his captivity.

The report of the Congress Inquiry Committee appointed to study the causes leading to the suspension of the civil disobedience movement was published in 1922. This report clearly brought out the internal differences among the Congressmen even though all sections of the people were staunch supporters of the non-cooperation movement. Shri Rajagopalachari, Dr. M.A. Ansari, Shri Kasturi Ranga Iyengar were for boycotting the Council elections. But the other group, consisting of Pandit Motilal Nehru, Vithalbhai Patel, Hakim Ajmal Khan etc., was in favour of Council entry and breaking the Government from inside the Councils. About this time, in July, 1922 C.R. Das was released from prison. He also shared the views of Vithalbhai Patel and Pandit Motilal Nehru with regard to Council entry. However, Gandhiji carried the day at the Gaya Congress Session in December 1922, even though C.R. Das was presiding over that session. Rajagopalachari was the leader of the people who represented Gandhiji's views. Ultimately, in January 1923, C.R. Das announced the formation of the Swaraj Party within the Congress. C.R. Das was the President and Pandit Motilal Nehru the Secretary of the Swaraj Party. C.R. Das had already resigned as the President of the Congress. The Congress seemed to be on the verge of a split, but due to the efforts of Lala Lajpat Rai, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Mohammed Ali etc., the split was averted and the two camps reached a compromise. This compromise was further consolidated in 1923 at the Delhi Session of the Congress, as a result of which the members of the Swaraj Party were given freedom to fight the elections and the other section was left free to go on working for freedom as before through the constructive programme under Gandhiji's leadership.

Gandhiji was released on February 5, 1924, and he tried to persuade the people who shared his views to remain within the Congress. But a condition of dissention was created again at the Ahmedabad session. Gandhiji compromised with the section led by C.R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru. In June, 1924, C.R. Das passed away. The British Government was enraged by the stance adopted by the Swaraj Party. But ultimately, the Swaraj Party humbly accepted the constructive programme of Gandhiji which the Congress had already adopted.

The Swaraj Party wanted Dominion Status for India. It wanted to convert the Legislatures into battlefields and attain its objective by obstructing the functioning of the Government. The members of this group wanted to non-cooperate with the government by creating obstructions through parliamentary methods. They wanted that either the legislatures should cease to exist or they should be the vehicles to express people's demands. They believed that by being inside the legislatures, they would be able to remain in closer contact with the masses and would continue to expose the Government. The programme of the Swaraj Party was negative, but there was also an underlying constructive element, because that negation was helpful in the attainment of the objective of India's freedom. But through that programme, they wanted to make the peasants, factory workers and the exploited sections of society aware of the freedom of the country. Hence, in this group, there were only those people who had no faith in Gandhiji's policies. They were eager to attain their objectives and as expected, were unhappy about the impact of the Western ideologies.

The Swaraj Party enjoyed good influence right from the beginning. They won more than half the elected seats in the Central Legislature. They formed a majority in the House for the time being by bringing together other parties subscribing to the nationalist ideology. As far as the question of the Provincial Legislatures were concerned, they could get a majority only in the Central Province and a near majority in Bengal. In other provinces, their performance was not very good, but was beneficial all the same. For two years,

the Swaraj Party, through its presence in the legislatures, continued to oppose the administrative reforms proposed by the Government.

Through the efforts of Pandit Motilal Nehru, the one success achieved by the Swaraj Party was that he got a resolution passed in the Central Legislature to the effect that a Round Table Conference should be called so that the process of drafting a Constitution for India can be continued. The Swaraj Party bounced the Government in the House several times. It succeeded to such an extent that it even got a resolution passed for the release of political prisoners. It prevented many official legislative proposals and demands for grants from being passed in the House. The Viceroy was forced to use his special veto to get those bills passed. As a result, the British Government was thoroughly exposed before the people of India and the whole world realized how hollow the claim of the British Government was that it was fully committed to a democratic system. It also became clear that in the guise of that apparent commitment, the Government actually wanted to muzzle the voice of the people. It was proved that everything was only a deceptive garb of imperialism.

While constantly following the constitutional path, those leaders realized that even though they were trying to paralyze the functioning of the Government by their opposition in the Legislative Council and Assembly, the real situation was that with its emergency powers, the Government managed to do what it desired to do. So the Swaraj Party ultimately turned to constructive co-operation with the Government. As a result, Pandit Motilal Nehru accepted the membership of the Sken Committee which had been appointed to consider the possibilities of a speedy Indianization of the armed forces. Vithalbhai Patel was elected Chairman of the Central Legislative Assembly. A mood of impertinence prevailed in the Party and leaders like S.B. Tambe accepted the membership of the Governor's Council without the approval of the Party. The Swaraj Party showed signs of cracking up. Leaders like Kelkar, Murje and Jaykar started openly opposing Pandit Motilal Nehru. Kelkar and Jaykar resigned from the Executive Committee of the Swaraj Party.

Ultimately, Pandit Motilal Nehru had to bow down in the face of the pressure politics they had been adopting. But the Swaraj Party still could not remain united, and in April, 1926, the members belonging to the minority group in the Swaraj Party formed a new party called the Indian National Party. The Swaraj Party lost its fiery image in the eyes of the people. In the end, these Congressmen again started leaning towards Gandhiji. In March, 1926, the members of the Swaraj Party staged a walk-out from the Central Legislative Assembly and declared that they would not enter the House until after the next elections. Occasionally, some members of the Party took interest in some special subjects. But they were tired of it in the end and they were not getting success in attaining their objectives.

Ultimately, after much serious pondering, the Swaraj Party and the Congress decided at the Lahore session in 1929 that the Congress would not take part, directly or indirectly, in the general elections and the present members of the Legislatures should resign their seats. With that ended the independent existence of the Swaraj Party and it was a triumph of Gandhiji's ideology in the Congress.

Pandit Motilal Nehru and others had formed the Swaraj Party with a view to carry on the struggle for freedom by using the legislatures and the administration for the purpose. From that point of view alone, it was decided in 1923 to fight the elections to Provincial Legislatures. In that connection, he visited all the constituencies. He had also gone to Nainital and in the middle of July, he had talks with the local leaders like Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Pandit Har Govind Pant etc. In order to attain his objectives, he had also called a conference at Nainital which was a great success due to the efforts of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant. In that elections Sri Ranga Aiyar was the Swaraj Party candidate for the Central Legislative Assembly and Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was the candidate for the Provincial Legislature from Nainital, Pandit Har Govind Pant from Almora and Babu Mukundi Lal from Garhwal. The elections were fought on a large scale and with great enthusiasm.

VII

LEADER OF THE UNITED PROVINCES

PANTJI HAD BEEN deceived in election once and so now he posted his workers in every town and tried to build personal contacts with the voters. In remote and inaccessible places he arranged to transport the voters to the polling booths. As a result, Pantji's opponent got only 170 votes, whereas in the previous election, his opponent had got 2,068 votes and Pantji had got 2,035 votes. This time, Pantji got 4,481 votes. He was not merely a leader, but he used to go into great details about everything he did and he had the natural capacity to impart strength to the weak points. That was why he won such a glorious victory in the next election. The Swaraj Party emerged victorious in Garhwal and Almora as well. Pantji went to Lucknow after the election and the session of the Legislature began in January. The total number of members in the Legislature at that time was 123 out of whom 100 were elected members. The Party faced the problem of choosing the leader from among the elected members. Shri Mohan Lal Saxena was appointed the chief whip; but it was difficult to decide who should be made the leader. It was also decided that a committee should be formed with the elected members and a few outside members also should be added so that the constitutional work could be carried on with a sense of responsibility.

At that time, Pantji was a back-seat member in the Legislature of the United Provinces. In other Provinces, the elected Swaraj Party members included persons of national renown like MR. Jaykar, C.R. Das, Dr. Munje etc. Even though the Swaraj Party was in a minority in the Legislature, it was still the largest opposition

party. But the election of the leader of the opposition was still under consideration. However, the manner in which Pantji raised the problems of the Hill region in the House and impressed the House with his parliamentary ability it brought him to the forefront when it came to debating issues in the House, and because of his inherent qualities, he automatically became a leader of the Party. The dignity, seriousness and idealism with which he conducted himself as the leader of the opposition, made him a centre of attraction for everyone. Because of his efficiency in work, he came close to Pandit Motilal Nehru day by day. Pandit Motilal Nehru's resolution for amendment to the effect that India be made a self-governing country with Dominion Status and responsible government be established in the Provinces was passed in the Central Legislative Assembly. Actually, it was not the original resolution but it was presented as the amended version of Rangachari's resolution.

From the first to the last, Pantji had been engaged in working in the United Provinces as the trusted man of Pandit Motilal Nehru, with the fullest devotion to his ideas. While Pandit Motilal Nehru had been working faithfully with his colleagues for the attainment of his purpose, Pantji was doing those very things at the Provincial level strictly adhering to the Party policies. Although Pantji had been using this platform for working devotedly to bring about political, social and administrative reforms in Kumaon, in the matter of principles and their practical implementation, he had been forcefully discharging the functions of the leader of the Opposition.

In 1922, Pantji wanted to move in the Provincial Legislature a resolution about constitutional amendment, but he was not permitted to move the resolution in the House. Having failed in that attempt, Pantji raised the question of constitutional amendment in 1925 in the form of a resolution which declared freedom as the indivisible and inalienable right of the Indian people, a right which every individual was entitled to exercise. He also said that the prevailing Constitution was incapable of fulfilling the needs of the country.

Through this move, he also got the status for Kumaon which brought the region within the purview of the law of the land. Earlier, Kumaon was outside its jurisdiction. Pantji also succeeded in introducing in the House a proposal with regard to compulsory primary education, rural uplift and reduction of police force in Kumaon. To begin with, Michael Cain was the Chairman of the Provincial Legislature and when he retired, Sir Sita Ram became the Chairman. He was full of praise for Pantji's work. In his views, Pantji had made the Swaraj Party into a strong and powerful opposition. He had shown his brilliant qualities in the House and everyone was convinced about his parliamentary competency, logical presentation of his views, his understanding and quick-witted responses. As a result, in 1926, Pantji made the following statement in the House as the leader of the Swaraj Party which was strictly in accordance with the principles of the Party; "My experience has shown to me that the Government is becoming increasingly indifferent to public opinion. The Government is behaving in an arbitrary manner, overriding all the promises or proposals it had made. It has a remarkable knack of disregarding public opinion and giving a highly exaggerated picture of our weaknesses. I am very pained and sad at our situation.

This insensitive Government does not know how to bow, except when it is forced and we want to acquire that necessary power with the help of the people. With these words, all who represent the Swaraj Party are resigning from the House."

Pantji's personality, his sterling qualities and his genius as a leader of the Swaraj Party were recognized all over the Province. Now Pantji was a leader not only of Kumaon but of the whole Province and he had been counted as one of the leading figures of the United Provinces in his own right. This honour was granted to him in view of his growing sense of dedication, perseverance, brilliance, and work guided by idealism. The United Provinces was the largest Province of India. The leaders of the Swaraj Party in other Provinces had been well-known right from the beginning. Now Pantji was an important figure not only at the provincial level but at the national level too.

After the term of the Legislative Assembly was over, elections were held again in 1926 for the Legislative Council. By that time, the Nationalist Party, which was led by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Rai, had also been formed. The Swaraj Party was fighting the elections in any case. Now the members of the Nationalist Party also entered the fray. Internal differences resulted in an inevitable situation. This time also Pantji won the election with a very large margin. He secured 5,826 votes, whereas his most important rivals Shri Raghunandan Prasad and Kunvar Bhopal Singh got 733 and 122 votes respectively. For his devoted work and the credit he got for his services, his opponents were forced to lose their deposits.

In this election, Sampurnanandji, who had been a very close associate and friend of Pantji throughout his life, had also won a seat from Banaras. Now C. Y. Chintamani led the Nationalist Party and Pantji led the Swaraj Party in United Provinces Legislature. C.Y. Chintamani was an intellectual with extraordinary personality and he was the editor of the newspaper *The Leader*. Both of them were undoubtedly great patriots. They were the leaders of two great political parties, but they were very close friends. Even though in name they led two different parties, in the House, they co-operated and complemented each other. Both of them criticized the policies of the Government in such a systematic manner that it became an important topic of nationalist thinking in the Legislature. It was due to Pantji's efficiency that in spite of their differences in political field, they could become complementary to each other in the Legislature. The session of the Provincial Congress was held at Kashipur and because of Pantji, this remote region not only entered the political mainstream but also came to the forefront.

Because of this involvement with political activities, Pantji gave up his legal practice, but the test of his legal expertise became known at the provincial and the national levels during the Kakori Bomb case which had its own importance in the history of the national movement in the United Provinces and in the Congress politics. The internal situation of the Congress was very unstable. It

was oscillating between the two ideologies represented by Gandhiji and the Swaraj Party. Communal violence was on the increase in the country. Hindus and Muslims were being swayed by communal passions. Gandhiji's influence was beginning to weaken. Even the Swaraj Party was not able to make any headway now. The alien Government, both in Britain and India, was happy at such a situation. The revolutionary youth of the country had temporarily suspended their activities but a fire was simmering in their hearts.

Some people were involved in constructive programmes and some were showing their brilliance in the Legislatures. In such a strange situation, the revolutionaries started bringing out a magazine called *The Revolutionary*. The influence of the Russian Revolution was growing in the country. The youth of the country was also getting inspiration from the labour movements in America. The revolutionaries were sure that the country could win freedom only through revolutionary methods. They felt that revolution was the only way that could bring freedom for the country. All the revolutionary groups in the country, big and small, were merged to form the Hindustan Republican Association. Among the important leaders were Sachindra Nath Sanyal, Ram Prasad Bismil, Rajendra Lahiri, Ashfaqullah and Yogesh Chandra Chatterjee. With a bang they made the nation and country aware of their existence and preparedness. On August 9, 1925, the Government treasury was being taken by the 6 Down train from Lucknow under armed escorts. It was looted at the Kakori railway station en route Lucknow and Bareilly. Ten revolutionaries including Sardar Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Ram Prasad Bismil, Sachindra Nath Sanyal were involved in this planned action. While this sudden attack put the British rulers on the alert, the spirit of the youth of the country acquired a new vigour. The method and the policies of the Congress were based on the belief that it should not get directly involved in the acts of violence for attaining independence for the country. But the heart of the nation was with those heroes. People regarded their adventure and courage with a feeling of hero-worship. The Congressmen also appreciated their earnestness to make sacrifices. The local Congress leaders could not have ignored the affection the people cherished for the revolutionaries.

The Congressmen came forward to defend the people who made those sacrifices. This strong defence on their part came to light in the courts of law. Non-violent Congressmen pleaded the case for the accused revolutionaries of the Kakori Conspiracy case. Pantji was chief among them and Shri Chandra Bhanu Gupta, Mohan Lal Saxena etc. were his vigilant and energetic colleagues. For eight months, Pantji continuously pleaded for the accused of the Kakori Conspiracy case as their advocate. The manner in which the case had been fought created the impression that the revolutionaries would win and they would be released straightaway. But when the judgement was delivered, Ram Prasad Bismil, Rajendra Lahiri and Roshan Lal were sentenced to be hanged and the other accused were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment upto 14 years. At the gallows, Bismil merrily sang:

No longer the yearning for bygone days
Nor the invading aspirations
Making the sacrifice of this life
Is the only longing 'Bismil' has.

If those Congressmen had not rallied round to defend those revolutionaries, then they would have been alienated from the people. Even though the Congress policy was not in favour of revolution by violent means their pleading for the revolutionaries restored the respect for the Congress among the masses.

Sampurnandji was already Pantji's colleague in the Legislature. Now Chandra Bhanu Gupta got closer to him and as long as this two remained together, the politics of the Province or popular power also remained under their strict control. This selection of Pantji also shows his diligence in choosing such competent colleagues. Gupta in the central region, Sampurnandji in the eastern region and Pantji in the hill region—they formed the Congress trinity in the United Provinces.

Events were moving very fast in those days. Everybody, irrespective of where he was, engaged himself in working whole

heartedly and with a deep sense of devotion. The undercurrent of patriotism was flowing all over the country, and a new systematic effort was being made to carry forward their work. In 1926, the Workers' and Peasant' Party was formed. The Indian Trade Union Congress was also launched. In 1926, Shri V.V. Giri presided over the Madras session of the Indian Trade Union Congress and a campaign to bring about character improvement among the workers began. The Congress also inclined towards the labourers. On the day preceding the session, terrorists assassinated Swami Shradhanand.

The Madras session of the Indian National Congress was held in 1927 under the Presidentship of Dr.M.A.Ansari. Communal violence was rampant in the country. The revolutionaries were being rounded up. There were strikes everywhere. The death sentence passed on the heroes of the Kakori Conspiracy case was a terrible blow to the nation. Members of the Central Assembly were making petitions for the withdrawal of their death sentences. In the Provincial Legislature, demand were being pressed for treating the revolutionaries as political prisoners. At the Madras session, the Indian National Congress for the first time went beyond the set limit of its earlier tradition and it condemned the death sentence of the heroes of the Kakori Conspiracy case and passed a resolution expressing regard for their kith and kin. The Congress, wedded to the spinning wheel and non-violence, also admired the patriotic fervour of the revolutionaries. This was on account of the popular feeling and also because of the Congressmen who were fighting their case.

In the meantime, the Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin, announced the formation of a Commission headed by Sir John Simon, a British constitutional lawyer of great repute, for bringing about constitutional reforms in India. The Simon Commission led to an ideological upheaval in the country. In protest against this the Congress declared Complete Independence instead of Dominion Status as its goal. Because all members of that Commission were Englishmen, some people described it as the White Commission, and came to the conclusion that the Commission had been deliberately set up to show contempt for India's self-respect. The whole nation rose as

one entity to protect against that Commission. This was a smashing reply to Lord Birkenhead's challenge that the people of India could never be expected to be united.

As a result, a Committee was set up to draft a constitution of India under the chairmanship of Pandit Motilal Nehru. The Committee demanded that India be given the same constitution and status that Canada enjoyed under the British Empire. The young members in the Congress did not agree with the idea of Dominion Status. They were impatient to attain Complete Independence.

Pandit Motilal Nehru was the nominated President at the Congress Session held in August 1928, at Calcutta. He feared strong opposition to the report of his committee. He made a submission to Gandhiji that he should help him in that matter. He said that by making him the Congress President, Gandhiji had put on his head a crown of thorns, and now he should not be a passive witness to the upheaval. Pandit Motilal Nehru declared at the Calcutta session that he was in favour of complete Independence, but for the time being, he was not against accepting Dominion Status for India if it was granted.

By this time, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose had established themselves as powerful exponents of the young opinion within the Congress. They did not accept Pandit Motilal Nehru's proposal. The Congress was visualizing the possibility of disintegration. At that point of time, Gandhiji came forward and proposed that if the British Government accepted the report of the Motilal Nehru Committee by December, 1929, then the proposal of the Committee would be acceptable to the Congress. However, it would not be agreeable to it if the acceptance by the Government came after that date. Seeing that the Congress was not showing the signs of breaking up as the British Government desired, it proceeded in very headstrong manner. As a result even Gandhiji became a protagonist of Complete Independence.

The British were now on the offensive. Members of other political parties were made to give evidence before the Simon

Commission which had been set up with regard to the constitutional reforms suggested by Lord Irwin.

The people of India desired that the Simon Commission should clearly state the intentions of the British Government with regard to the question of the Indian freedom. But the entire proposal was ostentatious and hollow through and through. Dr. Annie Besant remarked that it was like sprinkling salt on a raw wound. It was Pandit Motilal Nehru's view that the British were throwing dust in the eyes of the Indian people. In the meantime, the Secretary of state of India, Lord Birkenhead wrote Lord Irwin that if he could effect a split in the Swaraj Party by resorting to the tactics of political bargain, the British Government would be all out to help him. At the same time, the British Government was conspiring to break the power of the untouchables, Muslims, Sikhs and the trading community so that the British could use the minorities as their political weapons. The Commission interviewed only those Government servants who did not favour its boycott. The Hindus were convinced that the Commission was opposed to the interests of both the Hindus and India and were keen to divide the country by creating dissensions among them.

While these developments were taking place, the radicals in the Congress were gaining strength. There was also the talk of socialism in the country. But the Congress was determined to oppose the Simon Commission on all accounts. Determined young men like Subhas Chandra Bose and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru were the Congress secretaries. Around that time in 1928, Sardar Patel launched a peasant movement in Bardoli demanding the withdrawal of taxes on farmers. This movement gave rise to a strong anti-British feeling throughout the country. The peasants were awakened. Fear in the minds of people vanished. People came to accept the view that there could be no welfare and protection for them unless the country was free. The feeling of discontent was growing to an alarming proportion among them. Scared by that situation, Sandhurst prepared public safety ordinance Bill. His Bill was presented in the Central Assembly. Vithalbhai Patel was the chairman of the Assembly at that time. When the proposal was put to vote, there

were 50 votes for it and 50 votes against. Vithalbhai Patel voted against the proposed ordinance, and hence the measure could not be passed. But the obstinate British Imperialists did not accept the opinion of the people's representatives and the members of the Assembly.

In the changed circumstances that prevailed subsequently, Pandit Motilal Nehru submitted the recommendations of his committee in the following revised form. India needs a government whose executive consists of the members elected by the people and which enjoys absolute power. Under all conditions, it shall be guided by autonomous colony and if the need arises, after investigation, new and economically self-sufficient provinces could be formed. Sind should be made a separate province. There should be a system of joint electorates for elections to the Provincial Legislatures. Where the Muslims are in minority seats should be reserved for them on the basis of proportional representation and the same should be done in the Provinces like the North West Frontier Province where the Hindus are in minority. Apart from seat reservations, the minorities can also fight elections for common seats. If the elections were to be held on the basis of adult franchise, there would be no seat reservations in the Muslim majority provinces like Punjab and Bengal. After following this system for 10 years, if a particular community desires something else, the matter could be reconsidered. Seat reservations in the central and the Provincial Legislatures would be withdrawn after 10 years. This proposal was accepted at an all-party conference in which the Indo-Anglican Society, Awadh and India Society (Calcutta), Sind National League, Jamait-Ul-Uleman, Central Sikh League, Home Rule League, Muslim League, Chamber of Commerce (Madras) Indian Liberal Parties Federation, All-India Conference of Indian Christians, Dakshin Sabha etc. participated. Even the factory workers had been protesting against the Simon Commission by agitation through their unions all over the country. Around this time, two bombs were thrown in the Central Assembly from the visitor's gallery. This happened at a time when the Public Safety Bill and the Trade Disputes Bill were being discussed in the Assembly. The bombs were thrown in the

Central Assembly by the revolutionaries Sardar Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt.

The Simon Commission had been set up on November 4, 1927. The reaction to this in the United Provinces was not different from the rest of India. Hindu-Muslim animosity, internal differences in the Congress, awakening among the mill workers and peasants--everything prevailed in that Province as elsewhere. At that time, a political convention of the United Provinces Congress was held at Aligarh. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was its President. This convention was held under very hard conditions, because there were already dissensions in the Congress and attempts were being made internally and externally to prevent the Congress from being successful. On the occasion of the convention, fears were aroused both among the Hindus and the Muslims. The Government also adopted the policy of fanning their passions. It seemed that the convention would end in a feud on the very first day. Indeed the convention was a failure on the first day from several points of view. A few Congress workers did attend the convention, but Pantji, with his efficient handling, was able to turn that unsuccessful convention into a success. Two mutually opposed groups in the Congress, led by Shiv Prasad Gupt and Gauri Shankar Dixit respectively, were brought together on the same platform because of the good offices of Pantji. As a result of Pantji's efforts, Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Dr. M.A. Ansari, Mohammed Qureshi and Prof. Mohammed Ali also came on the platform. They tried to find solutions to the issues raised between the Hindus and the Muslims. This was a proof of Pantji's efficiency. During this convention, Pantji pointed out that the attainment of Independence was the only way to end the dissensions between the two communities. It was his belief that with the coming of Independence, the wicked darkness would be dispelled. Pantji exhorted the people also on the motive of the Simon Commission. He said that the Commission was an insult to the country and was a source of tyranny. He also declared that it was the right of only the people of India to prepare the draft of their own Constitution. He exhorted the people especially the elite class to strongly oppose the commission.

The Congress Session held at Madras (1927) has been already discussed. It was during that session that the Congress decided upon the goal of complete Independence. The second resolution was about the protest against the Simon Commission. On that resolution too, Pantji, as a leader of the Swaraj Party in the United Provinces Legislature and the President of the United Provinces Congress Committee delivered a serious, radical and logical speech. For the first time, Pantji had presented himself on national platform of the Congress and as the Congress representative of the United Provinces, the biggest Province of India. He participated in the open session of the Subjects Committee. That marked the beginning of his political career at national level.

VIII

THE SIMON COMMISSION

ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT had fully exercised its powers in the United Provinces Legislature, it had failed on the issue of welcoming the Simon Commission. But it refused to acknowledge its defeat. It adopted a new trick. During the session of the Provincial Legislature at Nainital, the Finance Minister of the United Provinces, Mr. Lambert moved a resolution to appoint a committee to co-operate with the Simon Commission. Pantji opposed the resolution on the grounds of propriety. He said that the Legislature had already taken a decision on February 25 and now, through this resolution, it was sought to override the wish of the House. Pantji fought a very serious battle in the House, but the official resolution was still carried through and under Pantji's leadership, the opposition boycotted the session. This had happened in the United Provinces Legislature while the Simon Commission had already arrived in India on 3rd February in Bombay. All political parties including the Congress, the Muslim League and the Liberal Party gave a call for a general strike. There were strikes all over the country. There were total strikes in all big cities of the United Provinces.

While the whole country was boycotting the Simon Commission, those Indians who were loyal to the Raj were also busy making preparations for according a grand welcome to it with the help of the Government. There were protests against it all round. But the Government was determined to come down heavily on the demonstrators. It was bent upon to kill the spirit of the defenceless people by resorting to lathi charges and letting loose a reign of terror.

A very important event took place during that period at Lahore. A great national leader Lala Lajpat Rai was the symbol of the

Punjab ethos and was extremely popular among the masses. He had brought about a social revolution in Punjab through the Arya Samaj movement and gave a new dimension to the education. He was one of the leaders who enjoyed enormous popular support. It was decided to take out a protest demonstration against the Simon Commission in Lahore on October 30, 1928. People gathered in very large number and they were led by Lala Lajpat Rai, their beloved leader. He was at the head of the procession. A British police officer showered lathi blows on him mercilessly. The processionists were also beaten up with lathis. Lala Lajpat Rai's colleagues and supporters were also wounded. Lala Lajpat Rai faced the lathi blows with great patience and fortitude. He did not move even slightly from his place. Such a brutal attack on this great son of India who was always greeted with garlands of flowers and who was nurtured with a deep patriotic feeling was a proof of the brutality of the British culture and exposed the hollowness of Imperialism. The news spread in the whole country like a flash of lightning and the whole country reacted with consternation against the black deeds of the British Government. Lala Lajpat Rai was already ill. And the lathi blows were aimed not merely at his back but also at his chest. He could not withstand those blows and on November 17, 1928, that beloved son of India with the burning passion for freedom sacrificed his life at the altar of the nation.

After his return from the Madras Congress Session, Pantji had to shoulder greater responsibilities, because of the Simon Commission. Along with the task of carrying on the propaganda against the Simon Commission in his own region, he had to work hard to spread the message in every district of the Province. Bringing about planning and co-ordination in politics is no ordinary task. In fact, it is a very difficult thing to achieve. To begin with, Pantji travelled all over the Province, made the Congressmen aware of the situation and reminded them of their duties. People were made conscious about the national goal and the need to achieve it at the public meetings. At that time, Pantji believed that freedom was our inalienable birth right. He declared that we would not rest till Swaraj was attained. A constructive leader with moderate views became

a leader of the non-violent movement and started working to create an atmosphere for it in his Province.

The debate on the Simon Commission in the Provincial Legislature began on February 25, 1929. The visitors' galleries were full. The members of the Legislatures subscribing to the Congress and the nationalist ideologies, were emotionally moved to protest against the Simon Commission. The last speech on the subject on the floor of the House was by Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant. In the course of his speech he said: "We want Swaraj. The history of all countries enjoying self-rule within the British Empire clearly shows that the constitutional difficulties could be overcome only by a country for which the Constitution is being drafted and only the people of that country could solve the difficulties for whom the Constitution has been drafted. If you are not satisfied with the appointment of the Simon Commission which does not have a single Indian leader as its member, then it is your duty to protest against it this very moment in the interest of the nation and of your own selves, and also for the generations to come. It is your duty to co-operate in everything that is being done to boycott the Commission. We are the soldiers in the struggle for freedom. We cannot rest till we have achieved our goal. Hence, give due thought to it before you give your vote on this resolution." Shri Mukundi Lal had moved that resolution which was seconded by Shri Badri Dutt Pande. Both of them were the leaders who belonged to the Swaraj Party. And it was the unequivocal and moving declaration of Pantji who was also the leader of the Swaraj Party.

That resolution was passed by the House with 56 votes in favour and 55 votes against. It spelt the defeat of the Government and the triumph of the self-awareness of the nation. It was clearly because of Pantji's competence. A month later, this victory was celebrated with great enthusiasm at Kanpur over a big luncheon. Many important personalities of the Province were present on that occasion, and they complimented Pantji. Great personages like Nawab Liaquat Ali Khan (who later became the Prime Minister of Pakistan), Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, C.Y. Chintamani etc., joined the

luncheon, and they praised and congratulated Pantji for his leadership. It has already been pointed out how that victory in the Legislature was set to naught by a conspiracy.

The news of Lala Lajpat Rai's death spread in the country like wild fire. His martyrdom became a source of new awakening among the Indian people. Consternation and wrath filled the whole country. More and more inspired with the fiery patriotism came forward to fight for India's freedom. In that situation, the Government was not prepared to order any inquiry into the cause of Lala Lajpat Rai's death.

The British wanted to systematically wean the leading figures in the national struggle by brutally attacking them and letting loose a demonic reign of terror. Now it was Lucknow's turn, where young Jawaharlal, who swayed the hearts of the youth of India, was leading the protest against the Simon Commission. He was the leader of the first group and Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was the leader of the second group. One day before the arrival of the Simon Commission, they were rehearsing the protest demonstration. There were 16 persons in the group of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the distance between his and Pantji's group was 200 yards. Pandit Nehru was surrounded by the mounted armed police contingent which dispersed the demonstrators by running horses in their midst. The satyagrahis were beaten with lathis and batons. Many of them ran helter-skelter to escape the lathi blows. But they got wounded and continued to be beaten up. In fact, this was the preparatory stage to make an assault on Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. He has described in his *Autobiography* this incident which took place when the Simon Commission arrived in Lucknow:

“...My own instinct had urged me to seek safety when I saw the horses charging down upon us. But then, I suppose, some other instinct held me to my place and I survived that first charge, which had been checked by the volunteers behind me. Suddenly I found myself alone in the middle of the road; a few yards away from me, in various directions, were the policemen

beating down our volunteers. Automatically, I began moving slowly to the side of the road to be less conspicuous, but again I stopped and had a little argument with myself, and decided that it would be unbecoming for me to move away. All this was a matter of a few seconds only, but I have the clearest recollections of that conflict within me and the decision, prompted by my pride, I suppose, which could not tolerate the idea of my behaving like a coward. Yet the line between cowardice and courage was a thin one, and I might well have been on the other side. Hardly had I so decided, when I looked round to find that a mounted policeman was trotting up to me, brandishing his long new baton. I told him to go ahead, and turned my head away—again an instinctive effort to save the head and face. He gave me two resounding blows on the back. I felt stunned, and my body quivered all over but, to my surprise and satisfaction, I found that I was still standing. The police force was withdrawn soon after, and made to block the road in front of us. Our volunteers gathered together again, many of them bleeding and with split skulls, and we were joined by Pant and his lot, who had also been belaboured, and all of us sat down facing the police. So we sat for an hour or so, and it became dark. On the one side, various senior officials gathered; on the other, large crowds began to assemble as the news spread. Ultimately, the officials agreed to allow us to go by our original route, and we went that way with the mounted policemen, who had charged us and belaboured us, going ahead of us as a kind of escort.....

“...And a thing that surprised me was that right through the incident, even when I was being beaten, my mind was quite clear and I was consciously analysing my feelings. This rehearsal stood me in good stead the next morning, when a stiffer trial was in store for us. For the next morning was the time when the Simon Commission was due to arrive, and our great demonstration was going to take place

The previous evening's incidents had the effect of rousing up Lucknow more than anything that we could have done, and

even before the sun was out, vast numbers of people made their way to the station. Innumerable little processions came from various parts of the city, and from the Congress office started the main procession, consisting of several thousands, marching in fours. We were in this main procession. We were stopped by the police as we approached the station. There was a huge open space, about half a mile square, in front of the station (this has now been built over by the new station) and we were made to line up on one side of this maidan, and there our procession remained, making no attempt to push our way forward. The place was full of foot and mounted police, as well as the military. The crowd of sympathetic onlookers swelled up, and many of these persons managed to spread out in twos and threes in the open space...

“Suddenly we saw in the far distance a moving mass. There were two or three long lines of cavalry or mounted police, covering the entire area, galloping down towards us, and striking and riding down the numerous stragglers that dotted the maidan. That charge of galloping horsemen was a fine sight, but for the tragedies that were being enacted on the way, as harmless and very much surprised sightseers went under the horses’ hoofs. Behind the charging lines these people lay on the ground, some still unable to move, others writhing in pain, and the whole appearance of that maidan was that of a battlefield. But we did not have much time for gazing on that scene or for reflections; the horsemen were soon upon us, and their front line clashed almost at a gallop with the massed ranks of our processionists. We held our ground, and, as we appeared to be unyielding, the horses had to pull up at the last moment and reared up on their hind legs with their front hoofs quivering in the air over our heads. And then began a beating of us, and battering with lathis and long batons both by the mounted and the foot police. It was tremendous hammering, and the clearness of vision that I had had the evening before left me.

“...Sometimes a dull anger seized me and a desire to hit out. I thought how easy it would be to pull down the police officer

in front of me from his horse and to mount up myself, but long training and discipline held and I did not raise a hand, except to protect my face from a blow. Besides, I knew well enough that any aggression on our part would result in a ghastly tragedy, the firing and shooting down of large numbers of our men.

“After what seemed a tremendous length of time, but was probably only a few minutes, our line began to yield slowly, step by step, without breaking up. This left me somewhat isolated, and more exposed at the sides. More blows came, and then I was suddenly lifted off my feet from behind and carried off, to my great annoyance. Some of my young colleagues, thinking that a dead-set was being made at me, had decided to protect me in this summary fashion.

“Our processionists lined up again about a hundred feet behind our original line. The police also withdrew and stood in a line, fifty feet apart from us. So we remained, when the cause of all this trouble, the Simon Commission, secretly crept away from the station in the far distance, more than half a mile away. But, even so, they did not escape the black flags or demonstrators. Soon after, we came back in full procession to the Congress office, and there dispersed...

“Now that the excitement of the moment had passed, I felt pains all over my body and great fatigue. Almost every part of me seemed to ache, and I was covered with wounds and marks of blows. But fortunately I was not injured in any vital spot. Many of our companions were less fortunate and were badly injured. Govind Ballabh Pant, who stood by me, offered a much bigger target, being six foot odd in height, and the injuries he received then have resulted in a painful and persistent malady which prevented him for a long time from straightening his back or leading an active life...

“...Most of the real beating and battering was done by European sergeants, the Indian rank and file were milder in their

methods. And those faces, full of hate and blood-lust, almost mad, with no trace of sympathy or touch of humanity..."

So far for Pandit Pant, the leader of the Swaraj Party was Pandit Motilal Nehru. But this particular incident brought Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru very close to his heart. He was senior to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, but still belonged to the same age-group. They remained affectionate companions for life. Although Pantji suffered many blows, the fact that he had done so for the sake of the national ideal in spite of his ill health was highly appreciated throughout the country.

Referring to this event, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant stated in the Legislature that he felt honoured by what he had done with regard to the Simon Commission. This event which symbolized the opposition of brute force with non-violence had given him strength to prepare himself for many severe tests. He said that fighting the Government which depended on brute force with non-violence had become for him an article of faith. He had accepted it as his ideal. That event led to great agitations in the Hill regions of the United Provinces; but Pantji handled the situation with care and did not allow the Congress movement to take a wrong diversion.

Around this time, Gandhiji visited Kumaon where he stayed from June 13 to July 14. Gandhiji went to Haldwani, Nainital, Almora, Kosani, Bageshwar, Kashipur where he created unprecedented awakening among the people. During this visit, Gandhiji was accompanied by many distinguished persons of the United Provinces as well as leaders from elsewhere. As for Pantji, he belonged to the region. Thus, Gandhiji brought a new awareness in that region and Pantji also came very close to Gandhiji. Gandhiji received purses at many places in Kumaon. At Pantji's suggestion, the amount so received was used by Bapu to set up a *Charkha Sangh* at Kashipur.

IX

FREEDOM STRUGGLE AND PANDIT PANT

THE TIME FOR the Lahore Congress Session was drawing near and Pantji, because of his chronic illness, had to be admitted in the Lucknow Medical College Hospital. He was really so ill that it was difficult for him even to walk. The 39th Session of the Congress was held at Lahore on December 25, 1929. The venue of the session had been named Lala Lajpat Rai Nagar. Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. During that session, Gandhiji was requested to lead the country once again since the whole nation was prepared to carry on the freedom struggle according to his instructions. This session had a particular aura of glory because the Motilal Nehru Report was nullified and the resolution declaring Complete Independence as the national goal was adopted.

The whole nation swayed with joy and excitement. Young people were eager to join this national campaign. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru adorned the stage as the Congress President. This leader of the youth of the country had now become a true national leader. It was decided during this session that the Congress could start the satyagraha any time that seemed appropriate. The resolution passed to that effect during that session is historically very significant:

“We believe that it is the birth right of the Indian people, as of the people of any other country to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may

have full opportunities of growth. We also believe that if any government deprives the people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a right to change it or overthrow it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally, and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or complete independence."

It was pointed out in that lengthy resolution how the markets of the indigenous cottage industries were destroyed for the sake of British goods, how the duty and currency exchange rates had been changed to suit the British trade and how the Indian people had been deprived of their right of freedom of speech and association. The nation had been completely disarmed, the people had lost their vigour and vitality. At the end of the resolution, the following idea was expressed:

"...We are convinced that if we can but withdraw our voluntary help and stop payments of taxes without resorting to violence, even under provocation, the end of this inhuman rule is assured."

During that session, it was decided that all Congressmen should resign their memberships in the Legislature as well as other official committees. The new working committee of the Congress was formed on January 2, 1930, when all legislators were called upon to resign their seats in the Legislatures. If any legislator hesitated, the electorate should put pressure on him to do so. It was also decided to observe January 26, 1930 as the Independence Day in the whole country. This marked the beginning of the second phase of the Congress struggle against the British Government which continued from 1930 to 1931. The third phase of the movement continued from 1931 to 1934. Even though there were two movements, they were so closely linked together that even though a subtle distinction may be made between them, basically they were not different.

There were many forces working behind those movements. All national political parties joined together to protest against the Simon Commission. The martyrdom of Lala Lajpat Rai, the Lion of Punjab, the demand of complete Independence instead of Dominion Status, resignations of the Congressmen from the Legislatures and others official committees and the civil disobedience and the campaign for non-payment of taxes gave an added strength to the movement. The Bardoli satyagraha was another factor that gave popular support to India's freedom struggle.

The Bardoli satyagraha was the struggle of the poor farmers for their economic survival. The Government was defeated in that struggle and it was such a tremendous success for Vallabhbhai Patel that the movement showed a direction to the whole country and he came to be known as Sardar. Economic depression and poverty and the devaluation of the rupee against pound sterling had a terrible impact on the country and it gave a new direction to our struggle. Economic distress and exploitation created discontent in the Indian society as a whole. Gandhiji kept that feeling under check by the discretion he exercised through his non-violent approach, disciplined it and linked it with the freedom struggle. Without economic basis the struggle would not have been so forceful as it turned out to be. The protest against the Simon Commission also infused more enthusiasm in the struggle.

The movement of 1920 created a spirit of nationalism through the boycott of foreign goods and engrained that powerful feeling in the hearts of the people. In 1930 picketting of the liquor shops and other means of boycott were adopted so as to build up strength of character. The decision to observe the Independence Day proved to be a boon for awakening among the people and for the entire freedom struggle. It was not merely the beginning of a national practice. But the Congress also started observing the Gandhi Jayanti, Martyrs Day, Flag Day and also the birth anniversaries of many respected leaders. This brought about mass awakening in India as a whole.

Of all civil disobedience movements the Salt Satyagraha proved most successful. There were incidents of direct action against the Forest Act, Press Act and other legislative measures that were against the interests of the people. In many Provinces, no-tax campaigns and agitations for non-payment of land revenue were launched and political conventions were held in every district. January 26, 1930 was observed as the Independence Day all over the country with great enthusiasm and with that the government became more alert.

In reply to the Viceroy's speech in the Central Legislative Assembly on January 25, Gandhiji prepared an 11-point programme and called it the quintessence of freedom. On March 2, 1930, Gandhiji wrote a letter to the Viceroy with a warning that if satisfactory reforms were not implemented by March 11, 1930, he would launch a civil disobedience movement against the Salt Act. The Viceroy's response was clearly negative and on March 4, Gandhiji said: "on bent knees I asked for bread, but I got stones instead." These words marked the beginning of the Satyagraha in 1930. Gandhiji declared war, but he wanted to begin it in a unique manner. And that was what he exactly did. After starting the Dandi March on April 6, Gandhiji picked up a handful of salt and with that the movement spread throughout the country. The Government had been waiting in readiness to disrupt the campaign everywhere in the country.

In the United Provinces, Pantji had been shouldering very heavy responsibilities. The Independence Day was observed with great fanfare throughout the Province. Pantji observed the Independence Day at Haldwani. A procession was taken out and a mammoth meeting was held. All the leaders had been instructed to see that the Independence Day was successfully observed in their respective regions and find out ways and means to make the civil disobedience movement successful by persuading the people and preparing them to make sacrifices. On March 16, 1930 Pantji was elected President of the Haldwani City Congress Committee. He was also the Chairman of the Nainital Municipality.

The Satyagraha was started on April 6, 1930. A week later, on April 13, news came from everywhere about its success. On April 14, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested at Raipur. Public meetings were held at several places to protest against the arrest. Pantji's area also did not lag behind. There the Flag Satyagraha was already on even before the Salt Satyagraha started. When Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested, students took out processions holding aloft the national flag in their hands. Students were lathi-charged at Nainital. There was an unprovoked lathi-charge on the peaceful and disciplined people of Nainital. A large crowd of patriotic people had gathered there. A big mass meeting was held at that place where there was also a bonfire of foreign clothes.

After that the students took out processions daily, singing patriotic songs. Section 114 was clamped to prevent awakening among the people and the authorities started arresting the processionists. Whoever was sentenced to imprisonment, raised the slogans of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai!" "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai!" "Vande Matram!" and infused greater enthusiasm among the masses. Not only that, later on the mothers of those young men who participated in the struggle as well as students and their guardians and their family members were harassed. It became a daily affair and that situation continued for long.

In the meantime, 31 persons were sentenced in the Meerut Conspiracy case. In Calcutta, Subhas Chandra Bose was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. Those things began acting like fuel in the fire. Although Pantji was at Nainital at that time, he had only one objective before him, and that was to make the people aware of the Salt Satyagraha in the whole Province, bring dignity to patriotism in the United Provinces as well as in his own region—although he had greater responsibility towards Kumaon. Nainital was the main centre of the satyagraha. The satyagrahis arrived from all directions and all of them camped at the Kashipur Satyagraha Ashram. On May 1, it was announced that the next day, satyagraha would be launched under the leadership of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and he would offer himself to be arrested. But even though he

started the satyagraha he was not arrested. A batch of satyagrahis wanted to go to Mallital via the Mall Road at Nainital. But the British did not allow them to pass through the Mall Road. On May 7, there was a total strike in Nainital when the news about Gandhiji's arrest was received. A large procession was taken out and a bonfire of foreign clothes was made under the leadership of Pandit Pant.

No arrests were being made at all at that time. The satyagraha was limited to meeting at places of strategic importance. And then suddenly, one day, the authorities let loose horses on the demonstrators. Pantji himself joined the satyagraha on May 21. He was put in a truck and let off at the Ramlila Grounds. After that a procession was taken out and the police snatched away the national flag. But Pantji was not arrested. The news about Sarojini Naidu's arrest was received on May 23. Pantji announced that he would make salt on May 25, and the police arrested him at the Congress Satyagraha camp. There was a total strike in Nainital that day. A big public meeting was held in the evening. On May 26, Pantji was sentenced to six month's simple imprisonment. He was so ill that he was hardly able to walk. But he still took part in the satyagraha. He was sent to the Dehradun jail. Although he was himself imprisoned, he had organised the satyagraha in such a way that even in his absence it continued. This was the proof of his organising ability.

From Dehradun, Pantji was transferred to the Bareilly jail and from there he was released on November 21. On November 22, he went back to Haldwani. Once again the peoples' gathering at the Congress camp, discussions about the Congress campaign, the quiet determination to strengthen the Congress and efforts to fulfil the vow of freeing Mother India by driving the British out of the country became his daily routine.

The Salt Satyagraha and the No-Tax campaign were in full swing in the Province. The masses were being subjected to terrible repression. Before that an inhuman incident took place in the sult region of Almora where people were brutally tyrannized. They were beaten up so mercilessly that they were very badly wounded and

maimed. Pantji formed a committee to investigate into this inhuman tyranny and arranged relief measures for the affected families. The campaign for non-payment of land revenue was going on successfully in Sult region. Farmers were not at all willing to pay the enhanced land region revenue, although they had no objection to paying the original amount. When the increased land revenue was not paid within the stipulated time, those people were harassed. The people of Sult region had been doing the sawying work every year during winter for the contractors. That year, they refused to do that work and decided to prevent the labourers who volunteered to do the work. When their batch set out for that particular purpose, the government forces came down heavily on them. Nearly 400 persons were arrested and they were all mercilessly beaten up as a result many of them were left maimed. That incident became famous as the Sult incident.

The Civil Disobedience movement was carried on in the United Provinces mainly as a No-tax campaign. The No-tax campaign had its greatest impact on the peasants. This Congress campaign spread in the villages as well. A kisan convention was held at Allahabad. It was attended by the representatives from all over the Province. Newspapers, letters, everything was banned. In spite of that, the Congress did not lose contact with the villages because the representatives had come to that convention and those representatives had become the messengers of the Congress. That convention was a tremendous success under the chairmanship of Babu Purushottam Das Tandon.

Apart from Allahabad, the kisan movement had been extremely successful in Agra, Kanpur, Gorakhpur, and Banaras as well as in Bihar and Bengal. In the meantime, some important events took place which completely shook the politicians. Two of them were the death sentence on Sardar Bhagat Singh and the passing away of Pandit Motilal Nehru.

The news about Pandit Motilal Nehru's serious illness had caused great concern in the country. Everyone started going to

Allahabad. Babu Rajendra Prasad, Dr. Ansari, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad and Gandhiji also reached there. They did not wish to have compromise with the British on any account whatever. On February 3, Pandit Motilal Nehru was brought to Lucknow for treatment and on February 6, he passed away. Pantji was by the side of his leader at that time. On March 25, 1931, the great revolutionary leader Bhagat Singh was executed. That event too was heart-rending for the country. A meeting was held at Lucknow which was presided over by Pantji. He praised the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru and urged the people to carry on the struggle for freedom more vigorously by following Gandhiji's path of non-violence. Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi also had become a martyr in the frenzy of communalism. The nation was facing a time of severe test.

Gandhi Irwin Pact

When the British could not suppress the satyagraha, they released all Congress leaders on January 26, 1931. This was followed by prolonged negotiations between Gandhiji and the Viceroy Lord Irwin. It was the first occasion when the talks were held on the basis of equality. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed on March 5, 1931 which paved the way for the Congress participation in the second Round Table Conference.

Although like the movement in 1920, the movement in 1930 also did not bring independence for India, it definitely resulted in several national gains. The Satyagraha of 1920 was a preparation for the freedom struggle and the satyagraha of 1930 was the symbol of the youthful vigour of the struggle. During this movement, 90,000 persons were imprisoned. The common people and industrialists contributed lakhs of rupees for carrying on the Satyagraha. The masses also did not lag behind. Hundreds of government employees gave up their jobs, people resigned their seats in Legislature. The campaign for picketing at liquor shops grew so strong that it reduced the government income by 20 per cent. Foreign cloth worth Rs. 70-80 crores stopped coming into the country, whereas, the total import

of foreign textile goods was worth about one billion rupees. Thousands of housewives came out of their purdah and joined the struggle. The campaign had spread in every nerve of the nation. Freedom was the supreme *mantra* for the country.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose considered the Gandhi-Irwin Pact a surrender to the British. But the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was a point of departure in the struggle for freedom. It was a 21-point document and its pronouncement was made on March 5, 1931. Its main points were: "A Round Table Conference would be held at London with a view to establish an elected government. Issues like India's foreign relations, India's Defence, minority problems etc. would be discussed at that Conference. Civil Disobedience Movement would be withdrawn and the representatives of the Congress would participate in the Conference. All prosecutions in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement would be stalled and there would be no boycott of the British Government. Picketing of the liquor shops would be continued, but the Government should be kept out of it. The ordinance with reference to the Civil Disobedience Movement would be withdrawn, but there would be no inquiry about the police action. Ordinance No. 1 pertaining to the Criminal Amendment Bill would cease to be operative and the cases against those arrested in the course of the Civil Disobedience Movement would be withdrawn. Non-violent satyagrahis would be released from jail, and those who have not paid fines so far would be exempted from doing so. All confiscated property, whether movable or immovable would be returned, but no compensation would be paid in the case of such property which has been sold after confiscation. All wrongly realised dues would be returned and additional police force would be recalled. The government would sympathetically reconsider reemploying those government employees who had resigned their services during the agitation. The poor people would be allowed to make salt for their own convenience, but they would not be permitted to sell that salt. The Salt Act would continue to remain in force. If this compromise is not accepted, the government would be free to take the necessary measures to maintain law and order."

In March, 1931, a meeting of the Congress members of the United Provinces Legislature was held at Allahabad. The atrocities perpetrated on the farmers by the Government was severely condemned at that meeting. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was appointed the special contact officer in this matter. He was entrusted with the responsibility of keeping in touch with the Government of the United Provinces as a representative of the Congress, about the release of the satyagrahis arrested during the movement and the discussions taking place in the light of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, and do the needful. On the other hand, the Congress had set up an agricultural enquiry committee, with Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Babu Purushottam Das Tandon, Venkatesh Narayan Tiwari etc. as its members. The Government also appointed a committee to go into the problems of the farmers. But the Government paid no heed to what they said. In that connection, Gandhiji himself held talks with Malcolm Hailey, the Governor of the United Provinces. During this visit, Gandhiji was accompanied by Kasturba. Gandhiji discussed with the Governor issues concerning the reduction of land revenue and release of political prisoners. That very night, a meeting of the nationalist workers was also held at the residence of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant.

A political convention regarding Kumaon was also held around the same time. Apart from Pantji, Babu Purushottam Das Tandon also addressed that convention which was presided over by Shri Badri Dutt Pande.

On August 29, 1931, Gandhiji left Bombay to attend the second Round Table Conference in London. He was all the while worried about the difficult situation in the United Provinces. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru kept Gandhiji informed about the situation in the United Provinces even in London. But even after three months, the situation steadily deteriorated. Ultimately, Gandhiji sent the instruction that the leader may handle the situation in the United Provinces in a manner thought fit.

The farmers of the United Provinces were very much harassed. They had been evicted from their land and the matter of returning

their land to them had been kept in suspense. As for the concessions given with regard to crops etc., during the previous year, the Government was not considering to apply them in the case of new crops. The conditions and problems of farmers in every district were examined. In 1931, the Committee set up under the chairmanship of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant published its report which proved in the light of the official statistics the highhandedness of the administration. The story of the mismanagement of agriculture and the exploitation of the peasants in the United Provinces by the Government and the landlords was confirmed by the official statistics only. In fact, this report, which focussed on the exploitation, tyranny and maltreatment of the peasants was an honest document. Pantji had showed remarkable efficiency in preparing that report. It was the first scientific document which focussed attention on the problems of the peasants in the United Provinces. It symbolized the anguished cry of 35 million exploited and accused farmers of the United Provinces. This report turned out to be a boon in exposing their conditions to the public. The Congress Working Committee discussed and accepted this report at its Allahabad meeting in September. Great leaders like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Babu Purushottam Das tandon, Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and Shri Damodar Swarup Seth were in all praise for Pandit Pant's work. This report was so important that it was even presented before the Working Committee and the All-India Congress Committee and was also sent to Mahatma Gandhi at London.

In the context of the Simla agreement, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant continuously met big officials to discuss the conditions of the peasants. The Congress President Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel carried on correspondence with the United Provinces Government and pressed his point. Mahatma Gandhi also met the Governor of the Province. Even then, no attention was paid to that matter. Of course, the Government, on its part, did appoint a committee. The Government wanted to silence the Congress by taking Pantji on that committee, but Pantji did not agree to be its member. This official committee held the local officials largely responsible for the miserable conditions of the

peasants. The Government gave some concessions but they were only nominal. No arrangement was made to save the farmers from eviction from holdings and loans, although the Government had officially declared that it would withdraw the concession if the farmers did not deposit the land revenue due from them within a month. The Provincial Congress Committee protested against it and stood firm on the resolution it had passed at the Farmer's Convention at Allahabad. The resolution demanded 30 per cent reduction in the land revenue which had been fixed in 1889. The resolution also stressed that it would be reasonable and appropriate in the present conditions. On that occasion, the United Provinces Congress warned the Government that if the demand of the farmers were not acceded to, it would launch a campaign for the non-payment of the land revenue.

The Government stuck to its guns. It accused the Provincial Congress Committee that by starting the campaign for the non-payment of land revenue, it had gone back on the understanding following the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Before this accusation, hundreds of Congress leaders had been put behind bars. Press censorship was already in force. A notice was also issued not to release Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the President of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee Shri Sherwani without the Government sanction.

On December 14, 1931, the Government promulgated an emergency ordinance which was very complex and unjust. Under the provisions of that ordinance, the Government was empowered to collect the arrears of the land revenue due to the local officials or the landlords in the form of the arrears of land revenue. In other words, the Government was now armed with powers to resort to attach, auction or acquire by any other means, the possession of farmers' property in order to collect the amount of the arrears of the land revenue. The Government now had the power to declare just anyone a dangerous person in the interest of public safety, and to compel him to stay in a particular area or deport him anywhere else or to force him to live in a specified way. The Collector had been armed with the power to use anybody's vehicle according to the order he

may issue. This ordinance provided for the arrest and two years' imprisonment or fine on the charge of instigating the people not to pay the land revenue or other Government taxes. The Government could sentence these individuals to one year's imprisonment or fine, if they were found stopping people from joining the Government, the army or the police. Through this ordinance, the Government acquired the authority to impose collective fine and collect it in any form as land revenue.

A convention of the Provincial Congress Committee was held at Itawah at that time. The ordinance had been applied to Prayag, Itawah, Kanpur, Rai Bareilly, Barabanki or in other words, in the areas around Itawah district. The visitors to the convention were prevented from entering the pandal. Instead of attending the convention, Pantji went to Allahabad on December 24. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Venkatesh Narayan Tiwari and Sardar Narbada Singh were already present there.

The leaders had started being rounded up even before Mahatma Gandhi returned from the Second Round Table Conference and touched the Indian shore. It was expected right from the beginning that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his colleagues would be arrested. Pandit Nehru explained to Pantji what should be done in such an eventuality. On December 26, the news came about the arrest of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the President of the Provincial Congress Shri Sherwani at the Ibadatganj station on their way to Bombay. That very evening, Pantji left at 4 O'clock for Bombay to have consultations about the new situation created at Anand Bhavan. However, in view of the countrywide arrests of the leaders, the plan of according a grand welcome to Gandhiji was abandoned. Sardar Patel was the President of the Congress at that time. A meeting of the Congress Working Committee was held at Bombay where the United Provinces was represented by Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant. From Bombay he went to Bhuwali. The Government machinery in the United Provinces had been streamlined to suppress the campaign. Section 144 had been clamped on all big cities and town of the Province and attempts were made to

suppress the campaign so that any public agitation could be declared illegal and repressive measures could be adopted.

On January 19, 1932, Pantji's house was searched and the Government took the Congress office at Haldwani under its control. The volunteers were being rounded up. The District Collector ordered Pantji on January 30, not to leave Haldwani. Even before this, on January 4, 1932, the Congress President Sardar Patel had been arrested. Along with this order, the Government had taken possession of all influential Congress Committees. Suddenly, such a reign of terror was let loose that the Congress became totally crippled. Sardar Patel had empowered that in all the places the leader would appoint his successor who would function in the event of his arrest, and that person would be all in all, a dictator. In that campaign, Pantji was the fourth dictator. He was successfully managing the campaign from Haldwani. He was arrested on February 18 and sentenced to six month's imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 100. He was kept at the Rai Bareilly Jail where Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had been already incarcerated. Pantji had announced the name of Shri Sir Prakash of Kashi as the dictator of the Province to succeed him. Later, Pantji was sent from Bareilly to Dehra Dun where his health deteriorated. Pandit Nehru kept a constant watch on Pantji's treatment and the two of them came into close personal contact.

Dr. Ambedkar was a leader who advocated and demanded for the Harijans' separate rights from the Hindus and carried on a campaign for that purpose. Gandhiji regarded the Harijans as integral part of the Hindu community. To stress this belief, Gandhiji announced on March 20, 1937, his decision to undertake fast unto death.

At Malaviyaji's initiative, a convention of Hindu leaders was organised at Poona. Before this convention, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Babu Rajendra Prasad, Shri Amritlal Thakkar, Shri Rajagopalachari, Shri Ghanshyam Das Birla, Sardar Patel, Sarojini Naidu, Dr. Hridayanath Kunzru, Dr.

Ambedkar etc. held serious and prolonged discussions. A compromise was arrived at and Gandhiji approved of the compromise formula which was also accepted by the Government on September 26, 1932.

After the acceptance of the Poona Agreement by the Government, the Harijan Sevak Sangh was established on September 25, 1932. This meeting had been presided over by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

After Gandhiji's call and under his guidance, the work of Harijan uplift started all over the country, and social agitations started everywhere on the issue of temple-entry for the Harijans. Although the Congress desired that all Congressmen should wholeheartedly devote all their energies in the Congress struggle and those who fully sympathised with the Congress, but it could not give full time for the struggle that could awaken the society through social work. All Congressmen engaged themselves in social work. After his release, Pantji also devoted himself to such work and because of his constant efforts, the Harijans could enter the Murli Manohar Temple at Almora.

The Congress session of 1932 was to be held at Delhi under the Presidentship of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. But he was arrested and the session which was held at Chandni Chowk was presided over by Shri Ranchhod Lal Amritlal. About 500 people attended it. Making, 'Complete Independence' the goal of the Congress, this session supported the Civil Disobedience Movement, and expressed belief in non-violence. This Congress session opposed separate franchise for the Harijans in elections which indeed was the issue on which Gandhiji had undertaken his fast unto death. This acceptance of Gandhiji's demand through the acceptance of the Poona Agreement by Dr. Ambedkar was a matter of relief for the Congress. It marked the end of a conspiracy to segregate the Harijans from the Hindus. Gandhiji got the permission from the Government to publish his weekly the *Harijan*.

Although the British continued to adopt repressive measures, the Congress stood firm on its ground. The 1933 Congress session was held at Calcutta under the Presidentship of Smt. Nalini Sen Gupta. The venue was the Chowringhee crossroad and Dharamatola. Since Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya had been arrested at Asansol, he could not preside over that session and Smt. Nalini Sen Gupta took his place. But the Government was perpetrating atrocities so as to force the suspension of the Congress session. There was even a lathi charge during the session. But even while getting wounded the Congress delegates continued to pass their resolutions. They passed resolutions even in the midst of that uproar. Smt. Sen Gupta was arrested. The acting Congress President Babu Rajendra Prasad was arrested on January 4, 1933. After him, Shri Madav Hari Aney was declared the Congress President. All these developments made the conditions in the country extremely difficult.

Gandhiji had started his fast in jail on May 8, 1933. That fast was for self-purification and way of expiation. Seeing that the situation was becoming very grave, the Government released Gandhiji. He suspended the Civil Disobedience Movement for an indefinite period. A section of the Congress was upset on that account. Gandhiji was under the impression that the British were human after all. He had expected that with the suspension of the agitation, the Government would release all big leaders. But the Government did not come round. Out of helplessness, Gandhiji announced that he would start individual satyagraha from August 7, but at midnight on July 31, he was arrested along with the inmates of the ashram.

The Congress session was held at Bombay from October 26-28, 1934, under the Presidentship of Babu Rajendra Prasad. During that session, Gandhiji's request of formally dissociating himself from the Congress was accepted. He agreed to make himself available to (informally) guide the Congress. During that session, the White Paper issued by the Government was rejected outright and the demand for Complete Independence was made.

In the context of the process of framing a Constitution of India which had continued upto the Round Table Conferences from 1927 to 1932, the British Government had prepared a white paper which was presented to the Joint Parliaments Select Committee for a detailed consideration which published its report on November 22, 1934. From the point of view of India, that report was even more dangerous than the White Paper. On that basis, a draft of a bill was prepared on January 1935 which was accepted as the Government of India Act, 1935.

In the meantime, there was a terrible earthquake in Bihar. Entire Bihar was engulfed in that tragedy which resulted in 20,000 deaths. Thousands of children were rendered orphans and thousands of women were widowed. The agricultural land covering 10 lakhs bighas was destroyed. Babu Rajendra Prasad was released from prison on January 17, 1934, in order to arrange relief measures for the afflicted people of Bihar. People from all over the country including Gandhiji, rallied together to provide relief to the people of Bihar who were affected by the earthquake. Nearly 2,000 workers engaged themselves in the relief work and the Bihar Congress Relief Fund was able to collect Rs. 27 lakhs. All the Congress units in the country were engaged in that work. Pantji also gave his whole-hearted active support in that work.

ELECTIONS TO THE CENTRAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

PANDIT MADAN MOHAN Malaviya attended a convention of the Congressmen held on March 31, 1934, which was presided over by Dr. Ansari. Pantji was also present at that convention. It was decided at that convention that even though the facts published in the White Paper of the British Government were wrong, elections should be fought in order to put an end to the repression and the draconian laws of the Government. A delegation consisting of Shri Bhulabhai Desai and Bidhan Chandra Roy and led by Dr. Ansari met Gandhiji on April 4, 1934. Gandhiji decided to suspend the agitation and on April 7, 1935, the satyagraha was called off and it was decided to fight the elections on constitutional ground. Mahatma Gandhi also gave his full support to it and for the first time the Congress Parliamentary Board was set up to conduct election campaign.

The Congress jumped into the election fray. A meeting of the Congress was summoned at Lucknow to consider the question of elections. Important leaders of the United Provinces attended that convention. Among these leaders were Babu Purushottam Das Tandon, Babu Sampurnanand Sri Prakash, Bal Krishna Sharma Navin, Mansoor Ali Sakhta, Pantji and others. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was nominated a member of the Central Parliamentary Board of the Congress. An Election Committee was formed in the United Provinces in which along with Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Shri Sherwani, Babu Sampurnanand, Mohan Lal Saxena, Krishan Dutt Paliwal, Bal Krishna Sharma Navin and Narmada Prasad Singh were the members. Pantji and his colleagues toured in their

respective constituencies and all over the United Provinces in connection with the coming elections and awakened the people.

The joint meeting of the Congress Working Committee and the Parliamentary Board was held on June 12-13 at Wardha and on June 17-18 at Bombay. The meetings were presided over by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Bidhan Chandra Roy, Madhav Shri Hari Aney, Chowdhary Khalil Ujma and Gandhiji were present at those meetings. Malaviyaji, Aney, and the Congress leaders held divergent views. The differences were so sharp and fundamental that ultimately, on July 18, Malaviyaji and Aney resigned from the Congress Working Committee. Pantji desired that those differences should be settled. However, despite the persisting differences, Pantji continued to work wholeheartedly for the Congress victory in the elections. Malaviyaji and Aney formed the Nationalist Party. In the United Provinces, the Socialist Party within the Congress was coming into prominence and it had its differences with the Congress organisation on the issue of elections. During the meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Committee at Wardha, Pantji raised that issue and solved the differences by his deft handling.

In November, Pantji was elected to the Central Legislative Assembly. It was at Pantji's suggestion to the Congress Subjects Committee that the resolution to form the Congress Parliamentary Board was passed. Babu Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, Rajagopalachari, Bhulabhai Desai and Acharya Narendra Dev were the members and Pantji was the convenor. This suggestion proved so useful from the point of view of electioneering process to the ultimate victory of the Congress that it became a permanent feature of the Congress.

The session of the fifth Central Legislative Assembly was held on January 21, 1935. The party position in the Central Legislative Assembly was: Congress 44, Nationalist Party 11, Independents (led by Jinnah) 22, European 11, Government Officials 26, nominated members 13. On January 16, 1935, the Congress Working Committee met at Delhi under the Presidentship of Babu Rajendra

Prasad. During that meeting, the Congress role in the Central Legislative Assembly was discussed. Pandit Pant was present at that meeting. A meeting of the Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly was called on January 17 when the election of the Parliamentary Party also took place. The result of that election was: Shri Bhulabhai Desai-Leader, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant-Deputy Leader, Shri Satyamurti and Neelakanta Das-Secretaries, Shri Asaf Ali-Chief whip, Dr. Rajan and Gadgil-whips.

On the very first day, the Congress moved a resolution for the stay of the order which directed the Bombay Government to be on the alert. Shri Satyamurti moved that resolution and Pantji seconded it. Through his achievements, Pantji proved that he was a parliamentarian par excellence. Rajagopalachari, Sarojini Naidu, C.G. Ramaswami Aiyar watched with happiness Pantji's able performance from the visitors' gallery. Sarojini Naidu was convinced that Pantji had extraordinary abilities as a parliamentarian. The whole country was impressed by his parliamentary acumen. Whether it was a resolution on communal situation or releasing of prisoners, matter of fiscal policy or discrimination between the British and the Indian Officials in the Government, a matter of cottage industries and rural development or India's responsibility during the war, the question of exchange rate of the pound sterling and the rupee or anything else--Pantji was always in the forefront. He possessed remarkable abilities even for the organisation and administration of the Party, which everyone acknowledged. Pantji's contribution in this field came to be regarded as unique and beneficial at the national level.

As the Premier of United Provinces

At the invitation of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, the Congress session was held at Lucknow under the Presidentship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The Government of India Act of 1935 was condemned by the Congress, but it was decided to fight the Provincial elections in the interests of the country. Pantji was in favour of contesting the elections. In April 1936, the Congress

Working Committee reiterated its decision to fight the elections on its manifesto and started the preparations for that purpose. It was clearly stated in the Congress manifesto that it was fighting the elections with a view to fight British imperialism and to put an end to the ordinance, laws and legislations promulgated against the interests of the Indian nation. In February 1937, he was elected to the United Provinces Legislature, and was elected leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party in the United Provinces. He resigned his seat from the Central Legislative Assembly. Because of his achievements, the Central Legislative Assembly had acquired a certain brightness. Hence his absence was felt by everyone. However, being devoted to duty, the responsibility of heading the United Provinces, the largest province of the country, fell on his shoulders.

Pantji was one of those political leaders who were totally devoted to the Congress. As the Deputy Leader in the Central Legislative Assembly, he worked with efficiency and zeal in parliamentary matters and with equal devotion in all other matters. Persons with special abilities show their worth only in their specialized field. But Pantji was a person who took interest in everything and carried it out successfully. This is a quality rarely to be found. Right from political conventions to working for communal goodwill and activities relating to the constructive programmes, Pantji personally presented himself in any capacity whenever and wherever he was required and plunging into the situation, carried out everything to a successful conclusion.

Although he took greater interest in the work relating to Kumaon and the United Provinces, he did not neglect the matters of national importance. If he bowed respectfully to the senior leaders, he also knew how to use the talents of his companions and colleagues in the best way, keeping in mind their abilities. There were people in the Congress who subscribed to divergent ideologies. But Pantji would bring them together to get the work done by them. He was neither a socialist nor a revolutionary. But he could understand the feelings and values they cherished. Hence, he treated them with

proper respect and regard. During the election period, as the Secretary of the Congress Parliamentary Board, he was required to shoulder the hard responsibility of travelling all over the country. But while fulfilling his local responsibilities, he also fulfilled the national responsibility with great efficiency. He used to fall ill frequently, but he was a man with an awakened mind. Along with political responsibilities, he also fulfilled social and individual responsibilities very well.

In the election of the United Provinces, Pantji had as his colleagues the brilliant men like Acharya Narendra Dev, Babu Sampurnanand, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Krishna Dutt Paliwal the men who could think independently. It was no easy task taking them all together and go ahead for the fulfillment of practical objectives.

The elections were held all over the country and the Congress won hands down in many Provinces. The Congress was in majority in Madras, the United Provinces, Central Provinces, Bihar and Orissa. But in Bombay, it had won 86 seats out of 175, in Assam 33 out of 108, in Bengal 54 out of 250. The position of the Congress was not very good in Punjab and Sind. The Congress decided to adopt the path of responsible co-operation with the Government. Subhas Chandra Bose and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other people of radical views were opposed to this, because they felt that in course of time, the Gandhian ideology which believed in the support and co-operation of the masses, would turn out to be similar to the ideology of the liberal political groups. But Gandhiji wanted that power to be put to use. He wrote in the *Harijan* of July 17, 1937: "Whatever it is, the tyrannical rule of the sword should be converted into the majority rule--despite all weaknesses and limitations it may have."

In that connection on March 8, 1937, the All-India Congress Committee passed a resolution to the effect that the Congress could form Governments in the Provinces where it was in majority, provided the leaders of the Congress Party in the Legislatures were convinced that the Governors would not exercise their special

powers to over ride the opinion of the cabinet. The leaders of the Congress Legislative Party met the respective Governors in that connection. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant also met the Governor of the United Provinces, Sir Herriot, on March 21, 1937. In the light of the resolution of the Congress Working Committee, he demanded an assurance that the Governor would not interfere with the decisions of the cabinet. That demand was rejected in all Provinces. As a result, the deadlock continued and there was a political crisis in the whole country.

On June 22, 1937, the Viceroy announced from All India Radio that the Governors would try to function by taking the members of their cabinets into confidence. As far as the responsibilities of the Ministers were concerned, even if the Governors were not satisfied, they would accept the best advice of their ministers despite disagreement with them. There was no reason to entertain any fear that the Governors were free to act with disregard to their cabinet so that they were authorized to do so or any special powers were vested in them. They were not authorized to interfere in the day to day functioning of their cabinets.

After that speech by the Viceroy the Congress Working Committee came to the conclusion that in the light of the Viceroy's clarification, it would not be easy for the Governors to exercise their special powers and it permitted the formation of the Congress Ministries in the Provinces. Two criteria were set for granting that permission. New laws should be formed in the interest of the Congress and the constructive programme of the Congress should be adopted and implemented as a means of public welfare. In the light of this decision, the Congress Ministries were formed in the United Provinces, Madras, Central Provinces, Bombay, Bihar and Orissa. In September 1937, the Congress Ministry was formed in the North-West Frontier Province also. After about a year, a coalition ministry was formed in Assam in 1938. These ministries remained in force till 1939. In October 1939, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution that the Congress Ministries should resign in protest against the undemocratic act of the Viceroy of

involving the Provincial and Central Legislatures into the Second World War without taking into account the feelings of India and without even declaring Britain's war objectives.

In the United Provinces, the Congress struggle was essentially directed against the zamindars and the communal bodies like the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League, which were enjoying the patronage of the British who were guided by their own interests. There were Muslims in the Congress too, but the Muslim League was bent upon proving its claim that it was the only organisation that represented the Muslims. The zamindars had formed a party called National Peasants Party, but its aim was only to exploit the farmers under the protection of the British. The zamindars faced a crushing defeat in the elections.

The Congress won 134 out of 228 seats in the United Provinces. It got 65 percent of the total votes cast in the Province. Pantji was elected unopposed. His constituency included Bareilly, Pilibhit, Shahjahanpur, and Badayun. The Congress came out with flying colours in that election. Much of the credit was due to Pantji and his colleagues.

When the Congress demand regarding the interference by the Governor was not accepted, the Muslim League leader Chaudhury Khalil Ujma was invited by the Governor to form the ministry but he declined to do it.

Pantji agreed to form the ministry in the United Provinces on July 12, 1937. He had a discussion with Chaudhury Khalil Ujma also because many members who had won the election on the Muslim League tickets had already joined the Congress and Pantji wanted to know on what conditions the Muslim League would be willing to join the Congress Ministry. Although the Congress had the majority, there were some hitches in forming the ministry.

The Congress was firm about having only six members in the ministry. Among those who had won on the Congress tickets, there

were dozens of members who were fit to be included in the ministry. In those days, the Congress had as its member men who were stalwarts in the field. It was also mandatory to include a woman and also two members from the minority in the ministry. Pantji was keen to have members of the Muslim League in the ministry. The Congress Working Committee discussed this matter at its meeting at Bombay. Gandhiji, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad were not in favour of making a compromise with the Muslim League. They took that stand because they felt that the Muslim members who had joined the Congress by incurring the wrath of the Muslim League would be put in an embarrassing situation by taking such a step. However, Sardar Patel was of the view that if the Muslim League was not accommodated in the United Province there would be no need to accommodate it in the ministry in any other Province.

The Congress Party in the United Provinces had some inner compulsions. Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai was not suitable and essential to be included in the cabinet because of his abilities and his nationalism was a matter of honour for everyone. In addition to him, if two members of the Muslim League were taken in the ministry, the proportion of the Hindus and the Muslims would have been 3-3 and that situation would never have been acceptable to the Hindus. Even though Maulana Azad, in his Book *India Wins Freedom*, has put the responsibility of that situation squarely on Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad himself was not in favour of taking the Muslim League members in the Congress ministries.

As a result, the Muslim League became permanently antagonized to the Congress and some people are of the view that it was only this situation that turned Jinnah into a formidable communalist, determined to have Pakistan. Whatever it may be, two Muslim members were included and on July 17, 1937, the Congress Ministry was formed in the United Provinces. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant became the first Premier of that Province and Home Department, General Administration and Forest Department were under him. Other members of the ministry were: Dr. Kailash Nath Katju in charge of Law, Development and Industries; Rafi Ahmed Kidwai in

charge of Revenue and Jail Departments; Pandit Pyarelal Sharma in charge of education; Smt. Vijayalakshmi Pandit in charge of Health and Local Self-Government and Shri Hafiz Mohammed Ibrahim in charge of Irrigation and Public Works Departments. Shri Hafiz Mohammed Ibrahim had won the election on the Muslim League ticket but had joined the Congress. Later he resigned from the Muslim League and contest and won the election on the Congress ticket. Thus, importance was given to a healthy, democratic party tradition. Pantji also selected 10 parliamentary secretaries. They were: Shri Venkatesh Narayan Tiwari, Acharya Jugal Kishore, Ajit Prasad Jain, Atma Ram Govind Khair, Hukum Singh, Gopi Nath Srivastava, Muhammed Suleman Ansari, Dr. Jung, Choudhury Bihari Lal and Karan Singh Kare. On July 31, 1937, Babu Purushottam Das Tandon and Dr. Sita Ram were elected chairmen of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council respectively.

In those days, the Union Jack was the flag of the official symbol of administration, but outside the secretariat, the tricolour was also hoisted on a high pole as a symbol of India--although the Union Jack fluttered on the Secretariat building.

Once the Ministries were formed, the Congress was faced with host of problems, though in principle, the way was clear. The high posts in administration were occupied mostly by Englishmen. On August 2, Pantji called a meeting of high officials in the United Provinces administration, and acquainted them with the situation of the Congress and its direction of thinking in the matter of governance. From the political point of view, the cabinet took the first step of withdrawing all political cases, the deposits taken from the newspapers on political grounds were returned and the government bans on some institutions were lifted. Later, powers of zamindars were restricted and they were deprived of their power of eviction and the taxes they had been levying were withdrawn. Their right to extract forced labour and forcibly demand gifts were taken away. This was a triumph for the farmers and the rural people. Despite countless obstacles, Pantji succeeded in getting these

legislations passed. This was an indication of the efficient functioning of Pantji and his colleagues in the ministry.

Agriculture was given priority. Cooperative movement was strengthened in the interest of the farmers. Loans were arranged for them at low rates of interest. Greater attention was paid to education, health, irrigation, Harijan uplift, urban problems etc. and separate departments were also started for this purpose. Pantji set up a committee under the chairmanship of Babu Rajendra Prasad for getting suggestions regarding the setting of labour disputes. Indian officials also started getting higher postings in administration. The code of conduct for the Indian officials in the Government as laid down by Britain was changed to suit better the Indian conditions. Attempts were made to eradicate corruption in Government. A demand for the Constituent Assembly was made for the purpose of drafting the Constitution of India. The Congress Ministers paid particular attention to the development of the backward people and rural pockets.

Through his actions, Pantji proved that whenever it was the question of public interest and administrative competence, the Pant ministry was not only capable, but it was also as qualified and impressive as the British. In those days, the angered Muslim League was provoking communal riots by creating communal tensions in the Province. The Muslim League considered Pantji an enemy of the Muslims. It wanted to create a situation that would lead to bloodshed. At the root of this evil was political ambition. Jinnah was personally opposed to Pantji, although Pantji was an idealist who followed the Congress ideals and was miles away from communalism. But from the administrative point of view, Pantji stuck to his duty and would not leave the culprit free. Pantji put restrictions on British officials as well and made them conscious about his own capacity. His ministry was united. Even though there were people who believed in different ideologies, he knew how to take everyone along with him.

TRIPURI CONGRESS SESSION

THE 53RD SESSION of the Congress was held from February 19-21, 1938 at Haripura in the Surat district. It was presided over by Subhas Chandra Bose. It was a tradition in the Congress to elect its President unanimously and Subhas Bose too had been so elected. This session was very unusual, because almost all decision had been unanimously taken. Before this session, Subhas Babu had tried to solve communal problems in an atmosphere of goodwill so that the Muslims would get their legitimate rights. But Jinnah was proceeding on the assumption that the Congress represented the Hindus and the Muslim League was the sole representative of the Muslims.

In accordance with the Congress policy, the Premiers of the United Provinces and Bihar had already resigned because the respective Governors had interfered in the matter of releasing all political prisoners. The Congress adopted an aggressive stance on that question. Gandhiji no doubt said that the special political prisoners should be released. But the Congress as a whole also passed a resolution about their release. Finally, the Governor-General had to bow down to the decision of the Premiers.

Right from the beginning, Subhas Babu was of the opinion that we should attain independence as quickly as possible by all possible means. Hence, his statement with regard to the impending war and the foreign policy (of Britain) was also indicative of that particular approach. He made it clear that in that matter, Indians should be influenced neither by international politics nor by the order of any alien government. He said that from every country, we should discover such men and women who are sympathetic to India's

aspiration to freedom, irrespective of their own political attitude. The Congress, he said, was the great platform of a mass struggle. It had in its fold people belonging to the leftist and the rightist ideologies, but it was the accepted platform for all anti-imperialist organisations and the Congress should provide platform to all those who had been engaged in working for complete independence of the country. That session of the Congress ended on a happy note.

The next session of the Congress was held from March 10-12, 1939 at Tripuri. It was one of the most controversial and decisive session in the history of the Congress. This session was historically significant not only in the history of the Congress, but in the history of the country, and had a bearing on the structure and its inherent strength. It was also a decisive turning point in Gandhiji's life and contribution. It was the affirmation of the nation's faith in Gandhiji, in an extremely difficult situation.

Everyone acknowledges the importance of Gandhiji's leadership in India's freedom struggle and that it was due to his great contribution and successful handling of the situation that India became free. This belief has given him the status of the Father of the Nation.

The sacrifices made by Subhas Chandra Bose, his nationalist outlook and patriotism and his service to the nation have great historical importance and the conscience of the nation honours him as a veteran freedom fighter. The Tripuri session of the Congress was a turning point in his life as well.

The clash of two personalities engaged in the freedom struggle came to the surface at Tripuri. During that session it was a hotly debated issue whether the Congress would go along the path of Gandhiji or that of Subhas Chandra Bose.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant had become a national figure by that time, and he was one of those who gave expression to the inner consciousness of the Congress. However, during that period, the

Congress had very great personalities on its platform whose contributions shine out gloriously in the history of India. Persons like Rajagopalachari, Babu Rajendra Prasad, Maulana Azad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Acharya Narendra Dev, Jayaprakash Narayan were with the Congress and without detailed references to them the history of the Congress would not be complete.

Pantji was the Premier of the United Provinces. He was the trusted man of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. He was a successful administrator. He had been the Deputy Leader of the Congress Party in the Central Assembly. There were few people with such matchless parliamentary abilities. Nevertheless, because of his unforgettable contribution, the Tripuri Congress established him as a Congress leader of great eminence. In the history of the Tripuri Congress, Pantji's role, because of the characteristic presentation of his views, would be long remembered and would be regarded as of immense importance and as a permanent feature in the history of modern India.

After the Haripura Congress, three names had been proposed for the Presidential post for the next session. Traditionally, two nominees would withdraw their names and the third nominee would be declared unanimously elected. The Congress President was to be elected at that session on January 29, 1939. This time the proposed names apart from Subhas Chandra Bose were Maulana Azad and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya. Mahatma Gandhi, though not a Congress member, directed and guided all activities of the Congress. Subhas Chandra Bose also held Gandhiji in great respect. Gandhiji had expected that Subhas Babu would withdraw his nomination. Most of the Congress Working Committee also expected the same. But on January 21, Subhas Babu again announced his candidature for the Presidential election.

Subhas Babu declared that he was fighting the Presidential election in order to make the anti-imperialist struggle more dynamic and assertive and to incorporate in it new idea and ideals and programmes. He wanted the election of the Congress President

to be held on the basis of certain issues and programmes so that the people could express their predilections on that basis. That statement implied that Subhas Babu wanted to take the Congress along the path of his choice; even though he believed that the Congress was the forum for people of all ideologies who were concerned with the attainment of freedom for the country.

Seven members of the Congress Working Committee Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Babu Rajendra Prasad, Jairamdas Daulatram, Shankerrao Deo, Bhulabhai Desai, Acharya J.B. Kripalani--issued a statement about this election. They declared that to their knowledge, the Congress President was always unanimously elected, and by announcing his intention to contest the election, Subhas Babu was setting a new precedent. He was perfectly entitled to do that, but only the result of the way he adopted would reveal to the people what sense of discretion he possesses. But they had serious doubts about it. They had expected greater unity within the Congress by respecting one another's views. When Maulana Azad finally withdrew his nomination as a candidate for the Presidential election and following the advice of some Working Committee members suggested the name of Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, it was in pursuance of the established tradition that the same person should not be the President of the Congress, were decided not merely by the President but by collective decisions. It was decided by the Working Committee of the Congress and the President merely headed it.

Subhas Babu gave a lengthy reply to that statement in which he pointed out that many persons had become Presidents more than once. And he stuck to his stand in the matter of the collective decision of the Congress Working Committee.

Subhas Babu declared himself a radical and said: "In the Congress, only a person of radical views became the President and the radically minded President had been able to get votes of the right wing members also. From 1934, the Congress President has been nominating the members of the Working Committee. Hence, the

President's position was regulative like that of an American President. He is not merely a constitutional head. I had requested my friends to recommend the name of some other radical member as the Congress President; but all of them recommended only my name. My name was recommended from several provinces also. Under these circumstances, I am compelled to contest this election."

Subhas babu was impatient to carry the country and the Congress with him. But taking such a decision without securing Gandhiji's co-operation raised doubts about Subhas Babu's prudence. Gandhiji was like the water that flowed in the stream of the Congress. It was not possible to ignore him altogether. However, Subhas Babu had faith in his own endeavour.

On January 25, Sardar Patel issued a statement that the election of a Congress President was not a matter concerning any individual or any principle. Nor was it a matter of the rightist or the leftists path. But it was a matter concerning the benefit of the whole country. He also stated that it was informally decided by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Babu Rajendra Prasad, Bhulabhai Desai, Acharya Kripalani and Mahatma Gandhi that if Maulana Azad was unwilling, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya should be elected the Congress President. He stated that it was, therefore, their definite view that Subhas Babu should not be elected the Congress President for the second term. But Subhas Babu stuck to his resolve to contest the Presidential election and he also expressed the doubt that all fuss was being made because they were lured by the power that may come to them.

On January 27, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru expressed his anguish that an unfortunate situation had been created and there was misunderstanding over the question of the election of the Congress President. In his view, individually speaking, no Congress principle or policy was facing any danger. It was true that in the final analysis, the policy of the Congress was decided by the Working Committee, but the President could definitely give it a different touch in the process of implementing that decision. The President was not merely the spokesman of the Congress.

On the same occasion, Mahatma Gandhi wrote an article in the *Harijan* in which he said: "Even though I am not in the Congress, let no congressman blame me any more. I am forced to do some thinking. Congressmen still expect me to guide them and direct them. Now the time has come for me to step forward. I see signs of revolt and we shall see it during the Tripuri Congress."

That election caused a commotion in the Congress. As a result of the election, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya had to accept defeat at the hands of Subhas Chandra Bose. He got 1,375 votes whereas Subhas Chandra Bose got 1,580 votes, despite all the support of the veteran congress leaders to Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya. Two days after the result of his election was announced, Mahatma Gandhi said at Bardoli: "It had been my opinion right from the beginning that Subhas Babu should not contest this election. I do not wish to go into the reason of this decision. Because I was not in favour of Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya withdrawing his name. This defeat is my defeat. I am worthless if I do not represent definite principles and programmes. Hence, it is clear that the representatives of the Congress do not accept those principles and programmes in which I have faith. Subhas Babu is no enemy of this country. He has suffered a lot for the country. He has before him a very heroic and pioneering programme. I am now in a minority and I wish his success."

Subhas Babu expressed grief over Gandhiji's statement and stated that Gandhiji should not take this as his personal defeat. He said he would try to win Gandhiji's confidence. Subhas Babu declared Gandhiji as a great man of the country and said that while he had the confidence of other people, it would be a matter of sorrow for him if he could not win confidence of Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest man in India.

Gandhiji was at Rajkot at that time, fighting a battle for public good. On March 6, he declared: "I tried my best to be present at the Tripuri session, but God willed otherwise. In my view, the Congress has only one task before it--that of purifying the Congress. It has become impure and depraved."

On the occasion of the Tripuri Congress session, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated a Khadi exhibition. As a rule, that was done by Gandhiji. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru declared at the inauguration: "I consider myself a socialist. Hence, in my view, even big industries have a place in the country. However, cottage industry is the backbone of the progress of the masses."

On March 7, the All-India Congress Committee met at Tripuri under the Presidentship of Subhas Chandra Bose. He was ill and was carried to the meeting in a chair. He was accompanied by a doctor to look after him. During that meeting, the historic resolution of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant came up for consideration. The main point in the resolution was that the All-India Congress Committee expressed its confidence in the old Working Committee and requested the President to form the new Working Committee in accordance to the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi.

This resolution had a background. When Gandhiji declared that Subhas Babu's victory was his defeat, Subhas Babu met Gandhiji at Sevagram and decided that meeting of the Congress Working Committee be held at Wardha on February 22, to discuss the Tripuri session of the Congress. However, in view of his illness, Subhas Babu postponed that meeting. In protest against the postponement, 13 members of the Congress Working Committee sent their resignations to the Congress President. The President accepted all those resignations on February 27. That was the reason why the point about confidence in the old Working Committee was raised and it was suggested to form the new Working Committee in accordance of Gandhiji's wishes. Because Gandhiji had described Subhas Babu's victory as his defeat, it was necessary to convince the people that it was still functioning under Gandhiji's guidance and directives.

That resolution appeared devious on the face of it and seems to be a means of converting the victory of a particular person into defeat in order to respect just one person. But taking such a view was by itself a great mistake on the part of the people, who were the

supporters of Subhas Babu. Gandhiji was not an individual nor an institution; but without being a Congressman, he was the protector, leader, guide and was universally installed in the life of the people and directed the nation's will.

That resolution of Pantji was not ordinary but extraordinary and a more horrific resolution has not come before the Congress in its history, although there had been many clashes and conflicts in the Congress on many occasions due to divergent views, and the Congress had even split.

Mohan Lal Saxena had also sent a request to discuss Pantji's resolution, which had been signed by 160 members of the All-India Congress Committee. This meant that the Congress majority was with Pantji. It was after great thought and deliberations that the responsibility of moving that resolution had been entrusted to Pantji. It was a wise and efficient decision. There was none other among Gandhiji's supporters who could do it to such an extent, and in such an impressive and reasonable manner as he could.

Pantji could be labelled neither a leftist nor a rightist. He was just a Congressman. He was a man with a sense of discretion and followed the middle path. He was a Congress leader with a practical sense. Hence, he could not even be accused of being a rightist like Gandhiji's followers and did not wish to link the Congress with progressivism. Pantji was given that responsibility on the basis of collective and wise decision of the leaders who were Gandhiji's supporters. Those who cherished affection for Gandhiji and were his followers, had chosen Pantji in order to convert their defeat in the Presidential election into victory. Those involved in the battle at that time were by no means inferior to Pantji in efficiency and sacrifice. Some of them talked too high. But on that occasion, the most difficult task of moving such a resolution was entrusted to Pantji.

The Congress President, who used to be called Rashtrapati then, expressed his view that there was no provision in the Congress

tradition or its constitution that would permit such a resolution to be presented before the All-India Congress Committee. But at the meeting of the Congress Subjects Committee, he asked the view of those people so that he could give his Presidential ruling on that question. Presenting his point, Pantji said that such an important resolution could not be rejected on the flimsy ground of constitutional provisions.

At that time, a large number of Congressmen wished that the matter should be settled by mutual negotiations. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Babu Rajendra Prasad and Maulana Azad went to Subhas Chandra Bose in that connection, but the outcome was not favourable. Subhas Chandra Bose was critically ill. Even during the talks, his mother and other female members of the family stood around to nurse him. By that time, Gandhiji had already broken his fast at Rajkot.

During the meeting of the Congress Subjects Committee, members of the old Working Committee sat with the ordinary members. It was a grim atmosphere. Those members did come on the stage at Subhas Babu's insistence, but they still looked as grim as before. While moving his resolution, Pantji made his point with great confidence and the arguments were all his own. In his view, because of the misunderstandings that had spread in the country and the Congress over the election of the Congress President, it was necessary that the All-India Congress Committee should clarify its policy and explain the real state of affairs. He stated that the Congress should express its unswerving faith in the basic policies on which its programmes had been based under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi, and it should unequivocally declare the future programme of the Congress should also be based on the same policies. The resolution expressed its faith in the action of the former Working Committee. It expressed sorrow at the fact that some of its members had been incriminated. At a time when the country and the Congress was likely to face an extremely difficult situation, only Gandhiji's leadership could take the country and the Congress along the path of victory. In such a situation, it was necessary that

the Congress Working Committee expressed its complete faith in him. Hence, the All-India Congress Committee requests the Congress President that he should from the Congress Working Committee following the wishes of Gandhiji.

Pantji moved that resolution with an admirable and impressive adroitness. Everyone can put forth his point in the midst of his supporters. But it is no ordinary thing to express in a forthright manner one's point of view in front of group of excited colleagues and get them round, and that too, in front of those who are opponents, who are very sentimental and emotionally charged. It would not be out of place to quote a portion from the speech he made on that occasion:

"It is essentially to dispel the illusion that there has been any change in the Congress policy because of the victory of Subhas Bose, and that the Congress has rejected Gandhiji's principles and his methods. For that also it is necessary that we express complete faith in Mahatma Gandhi's leadership. Except the programmes presented by Mahatma Gandhi, the country has no other programme for the freedom of India. If Mahatma Gandhi and the members of the old Working Committee are not with the Congress, our freedom struggle would lose its force. By passing this resolution, we would be strengthening the hands of Subhas Babu. Are we going to deprive ourselves of the service of the leaders like Babu Rajendra Prasad and Maulana Azad? And what shall I say about Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru? He is the man on whom the country has pinned the greatest hope next to Mahatma Gandhi. Would it be sensible that the Congress is deprived of services of such men? And can you even think that Subhas Babu would be able to shoulder such a heavy burden without their co-operation? It is true that during the election, some things were said which had better remained unsaid. But I absolutely refuse to believe that Subhas Babu wants to malign his colleagues in any way. He himself has clarified in his last speech that he has merely expressed what is being generally discussed in the country. He did not believe in the least that his colleagues had been acting against the Congress principles and policies. We have

to show to the world that our faith in Mahatma Gandhi is unswerving. The country cannot make progress unless he shows the way. I am also certain that if he ceases to co-operate with the Congress, the country would no longer have faith in you or me."

The delegates from Bengal took that resolution as a challenge. There was no unanimity of opinion in the United Provinces. The way was not clear. The Socialist camp of the Congress wanted that instead of forming the Working Committee according to the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi, Pantji's resolution be amended to say that the Working Committee should be formed in consultation with Mahatma Gandhi. Shri M.N. Roy, Mrs. M.S. Aney Nariman and the poet Shardul Singh were the supporters of Subhas Babu. Rajagopalachari and others supported Pantji's resolution. Satyamurti was not in favour of making any amendment in Pantji's resolution. The resolution was debated for seven and a half hours. Acharya Narendra Dev pleaded with Pantji that he should accept the amendment suggested by the Congress Socialist delegates who were present.

When Pantji rose to reply, there was loud uproar from all sides. The delegates demanded the postponement of the session to the next day, March 10. The following day, when Pantji stood up to make his statement he expressed his points confidently and emphatically. He said that it was not a personal matter that the leaders would settle after mutual discussion. When the Congress delegates voted for Subhas Babu, they did not intend thereby to pass a no-confidence vote against Mahatma Gandhi. During the discussion, almost everyone had expressed his faith in Mahatma Gandhi and also supported the view that the continued co-operation of the old Working Committee members should be sought. Ultimately, the amendments were rejected and Pantji's resolution was passed with strong majority vote in the Congress Subjects Committee.

At that time, Subhas Babu was writhing in raging fever (105° F). The doctors advised that he should immediately be removed to a hospital at Jabalpur. But Subhas Babu said that instead of leaving

Tripuri in the midst of such a grave situation, he would prefer to die. He was in such a critical state that he could not attend the session. In the plenary session of the Congress, M.S. Aney moved a resolution that in view of Subhas Babu's critical health, Pantji's resolution should be postponed till the next session so that Subhas Babu could be given proper medical treatment. Pantji replied that the delegates were perfectly entitled to do that. He said that he also accept Aney's resolution and by passing it, the Congress President could be immediately sent to the hospital at Jabalpur.

All the leaders desired that Subhas Babu should be sent to the Jabalpur hospital at once. When the resolution was placed before the plenary session to assess the view of the delegates, the large majority was in favour of postponing the session. The resolution was no measure to test the strength of the two groups, but it had been passed in view of the feeling of anxiety in the whole Congress as well as on moral ground. A group of enthusiasts from Bengal regarded this as Subhas Babu's victory and started raising slogans of victory to Subhas Bose and his elder brother Sarat Chandra Bose. Carried off their feet by their enthusiasm, they started celebrating the occasion. They went to the extent of preventing even Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru from speaking. After a tumultuous uproar for about an hour peace was restored in response to an appeal by Sarat Chandra Bose and then Pandit Nehru was able to make his speech. An almost successful task became a failure because of the mistake on the part of some impetuous followers of Subhas Chandra Bose, and ultimately, his staunch supporter M.S. Aney withdrew his resolution.

On the following day, discussion on Pantji's resolution began in the open session. Shri N.V. Gadgil supported the resolution. Shri Nariman proposed that in view of the critical health of the Congress President, discussion on the resolution be postponed till he got fully recovered. Pantji said that Nariman's resolution was without any substance at all. Nariman's resolution was not passed. As a spokesman of the Socialist camp, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan declared that the Socialist Party would take a neutral stand on that resolution. M.S. Aney opposed the resolution.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant observed patiently and said in a serious tone: "I am compelled to make some remarks about the Congress President even though he is so seriously ill. It is a matter of great sorrow and pain for me. But I have no control over this situation. My resolution is in no way a vote of no-confidence against the President. We desire that he should continue to be the President. We only wish to have unity in the Congress." The resolution moved by Pantji was carried.

Pantji's resolution was of decisive importance in the history of the Indian National Congress. Reacting to the incidents that took place on the Congress platform on that occasion, Pantji was described by his opponents as a ruthless politician. On the other hand, those Congressmen who followed Gandhiji's ideas gave him importance as a quiet, patient and serious-minded leader and regarded him as a protector and regulator of the Congress.

At Tripuri, while on the one hand that decisive drama took place, on the other hand, the views of the Congressmen about the impending war were also expressed. It was pointed out in very clear terms in that resolution that the Congress stood completely opposed to the British war policy, because Britain had always helped the totalitarian forces and destroyed democratic values. The Congress was equally opposed to imperialism and fascism and was in favour of eliminating both in the interest of peace and progress of the world. In the opinion of the Congress, it was imperative that India should frame its own foreign policy like an independent country opposing both imperialism and fascism. It would be the road to peace and freedom. Here, it is necessary to know in detail the background of the exchange of views between Subhas Chandra Bose and Gandhiji before the resignation of Subhas Bose.

Gandhiji met the Viceroy at Delhi in the middle of March in connection with the problems of Rajkot. Gandhiji reached Calcutta in April to take part in the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee. He wrote at that time to Subhas Chandra Bose: "The more I read Pantji's resolution, the more I dislike it. It has no answer

to the present difficulties. I do not wish to place on you the burden of the Working Committee, nor can I give an assurance about the Working Committee getting its policy endorsed by the All-India Congress Committee.”

It was at this session of the Congress that Subhas Bose had resigned. The immediate Presidential responsibility was entrusted to Sarojini Naidu. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru moved a resolution requesting Subhas Babu to withdraw his resignation and announce the new Working Committee in the light of the Congress resolution. He also declared that the two members of the Working Committee, Shri Jamnalal Bajaj and Jairamdas Daulatram would be resigning on grounds of health, and in their place, Subhas Babu would take two new members in the Working Committee in consultation with his colleagues. That session ended in chaos and Subhas Chandra Bose rejected Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's proposal. Subhas Babu said: “Generally speaking, Gandhiji's word is law for me, but where the question of principle is involved, I feel that it is not possible for me to accept his counsel or suggestion.”

In the end, Sarojini Naidu repeated her appeal that Subhas Babu should accept that proposal. But he did not agree. When there was no alternative, Sarojini Naidu proposed that a new Congress President should be elected. Hence, Babu Rajendra Prasad was elected President for the remaining term of that year. The All-India Congress Committee met on May, 1939 and Subhas Babu agreed to be on the Working Committee. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru also did the same.

With Gandhiji's approval, Babu Rajendra Prasad formed the Working Committee again with the old members. Subhas Babu announced formation of a new party called the Forward Block within the Congress. It was Subhas Babu's aim to bring together on the same platform all revolutionary, anti-imperialists and progressive forces on a minimum common programme. The Congress Working Committee met on August 9, 1939, at Wardha for three days. During that meeting there was a discussion on the explanation given by Subhas Bose in reply to a charge, that he had been

organising anti-Congress meeting, demonstrations etc. The Congress Working Committee then debarred Subhas Babu from holding any post in the Congress for three years. At the same time, a resolution was also passed that the Congress Governments in the Provinces should not co-operate with the British Government in any war preparations against the policy of the Congress. The Congress Governments were urged to follow this resolution fully and be prepared to resign in the event of the dismissal of the Congress Governments on that account.

XII

PARTICIPATION IN FREEDOM STRUGGLE

ON SEPTEMBER 3, 1939, England declared war against Germany. That very day, without taking any Indian leaders, legislators or people into confidence, the Viceroy announced that India too was involved in the War. The Congress Working Committee discussed that issue at Wardha for a week. The Viceroy also invited the Indian leaders for discussion. On September 14, the Congress Working Committee passed its policy resolution with regard to the war. That decisive resolution was published in the form of a demand in which it was basically clarified that if the World War was for the purpose of maintaining the status quo and keeping entrenched the vested interests and the conveniences of the colonial interests of the Imperialist power, then India had nothing to do with that war. If the objective of that war was to bring about a democratic world order, then India would be particularly interested in it. In that case, Britain should put an end to imperialism in the territories under its rule and establish a completely democratic system in India. Britain should grant to India the right to self-determination and also a right to frame its own constitution. This was an extremely revolutionary resolution and it expressed India's aspirations.

The Viceroy invited 50 Indian leaders with different ideologies to discuss the issue of the war. In the meantime, the British Parliament amended the Government of India Act of 1935 through which the powers of the Legislature and the Executive were curtailed and restricted. On October 17, the Viceroy declared that after the war, the Government would be willing to reconsider, in

consultation with the Indian leaders, the composition of the existing legislatures. On October 22, the Congress Working Committee expressed dissatisfaction at the Viceroy's statement and declared that the Congress was not in a position to co-operate with the Government in any way.

In the light of this resolution, the Congress Ministries in the Provinces had to actively carry forward their strategy by resigning their office. On October 27, 1939, Pantji moved a resolution on the question of the World War in the Legislature of the United Provinces. The resolution expressed the sorrow of the House on the fact that the British Government had involved India in the World War without taking the people of India into confidence. To the utter disregard of the Indian people, the powers of the Provincial Government and of the House had been curtailed. Despite being ill Pantji delivered his speech. In that speech he reiterated the accepted policy of the Congress. The resolution was discussed for four days after which it was passed.

Pantji always remained a disciplined soldier of the Congress. Any matter once decided by the Congress, Pantji took it as his own decision and gave a concrete shape to it. Pantji declared that in accordance with the decision of the house, his ministry would resign that evening. Pantji handed over the resignation of his ministry at seven in the evening on October 30, 1939. Eight out of 11 Provinces had Congress Governments and all of them had resigned.

The Governors set up Advisory Committees for carrying on administration in those Provinces. One such Committee had been set up in the United Provinces also. Whatever those advisors did, was in contravention to the policies and functioning of the Congress Ministries. All actions of the Congress Ministries had been in the interests of the public. Those advisors completely ignored what the Congress Ministries had done. For instance, they introduced cuts in the expenditure earmarked for rural development. They brought the anti-corruption branch under the control of the Police Department. They lifted government's control over the liquor shops and gave their management in the hands of private contractors.

That caused a great upheaval in the Congress. Not only that, but all sorts of accusations were being levelled against the Congress. The session of the United Provinces Congress was held at Mathura in the form of a political convention, where the need of an immediate non-violent struggle for India's freedom was being felt. Pantji did not sit quiet in such a situation. On January 14, 1940, a meeting of the Congress members of the Legislature was held at Lucknow under Pantji's chairmanship. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was a special invitee to that meeting. All those questions were frankly discussed during that meeting. In the opinion of the Congress, the Government had been acting against the decisions of the Congress Ministries which was immoral from the administrative as well as political point of view because it amounted to rejecting the elected representatives who had been acting in the interests of the people.

This was followed by a political convention at Gorakhpur which was presided over by Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and inaugurated by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. It was clear from the speeches of both of them that the struggle for freedom was imminent. The Congress leaders felt that it was the most opportune time to start the freedom struggle. They were full of vigour and excitement and they were not ready for any prevarication.

On November 1, 1939, Gandhiji, Babu Rajendra Prasad and Jinnah met the Viceroy to discuss the proposal of the British Government to expand the Executive Council. Mahatma Gandhi refused to co-operate in any way, because he was of the opinion that the Government policy was completely opposed to the decisions of the Congress. He was also against forcibly bringing in the communal problem as a pretext to shelve the question of India's freedom. The All-India Congress Committee met at Allahabad in the middle of November, at which the Congress kept the door open for negotiation with the Government. However, it completely disagreed with the proposals of the Government. During that session, a demand was made for setting up the Constituent Assembly to frame the constitution of Independent India. Gandhiji also supported the demand for the Constituent Assembly.

Gandhiji also believed that the Constituent Assembly alone could present a solution to the communal problem in a democratic manner. But Jinnah took a very stubborn attitude. He was not as interested in India's freedom as in the downfall of the Congress. Instead of resigning from the Provincial Governments, the Muslim League announced its decision to co-operate with Britain in its war efforts.

The Muslim League treated the resignations of the Congress Ministries as its deliverance and December 22 was declared by it as the Day of Deliverance. Jinnah rejected Gandhiji's request that the Muslim League should not observe that day as their Day of Deliverance as it would further intensify the communal feelings. Maulana Azad openly opposed Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Sardar Patel proved the Pirpur Report as baseless. The Pirpur Report was an account of doings of the Congress Ministries prepared by the Muslim League in which it had accused the Congress administration of communal crimes. Seeing that situation, Jinnah adopted a new stance and announced that the day should be celebrated as the Day of Deliverance not only of the Muslim League but of all minorities, so that the Congress should scorch under its impact. Pride and arrogance had robbed Jinnah of all sense of discretion.

The Congress Working Committee met at Wardha in the last week of December and again ratified its earlier decision. On February 26, 1940, the Congress Working Committee met at Patna, where it passed only one resolution--the resolution about Complete Independence for India. That resolution also mentioned about active preparations for Civil Disobedience Movement to attain that objective.

The Ramgarh session of the Congress was held on March 19, 1940, under the Presidentship of Maulana Azad. M.N. Roy was also a candidate for the Congress Presidentship, but he secured only 183 votes whereas Maulana Azad got 1,864 votes. The Muslim League held its session at Lahore during which it declared its full faith in

the demand for Pakistan. The meeting of the Congress Working Committee was called at Wardha in April, when it came to the conclusion that it was left with no alternative except to start the Civil Disobedience Movement. The Congress Working Committee met again at Wardha on June 17, 1940. During that meeting, Gandhiji expressed his faith in the principle of non-violence and declared that he had now nothing in common with the policy and programme of the Congress. Hence, the Congress should function without him and do what it thought right and should hold its Working Committee meetings not at Wardha but elsewhere.

In Europe, Germany was going ahead with full force in the World War. France had been defeated. The situation was worsening day by day. In that situation, the Congress decided to continue its struggle for freedom and not co-operate with Britain in any way in its war efforts. It called upon the Congressmen not to contribute to the war fund or recruit themselves as Civil Guards. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru made it clear that there were differences between Gandhiji and the Congress Working Committee, but it was not the parting of hearts. Talks were held between Gandhiji and the Viceroy on June 21, 1940. Mahatma Gandhi made it clear that the Viceroy had invited leaders of political parties for talks. However, he had been invited not as a party leader but as a friend.

An emergency meeting of the Congress Working Committee was held on July 3, 1940 and the Congress reiterated its demand for Complete Independence in unequivocal terms, and insisted on the formation of a Provisional Government in the country in which the people would have trust. This resolution brought the internal differences of the Congress to the surface. Rajagopalachari interpreted the resolution as readiness on the part of the Congress to participate fully in the war if the Government acceded to its demand. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru explained that the resolution was passed so as to protect our freedom and enable us to fully prepare ourselves for it. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan resigned from the Congress Working Committee because of his complete faith in non-violence. Gandhiji, who advocated non-violence even during the

war, stated that Rajaji was the architect of that resolution and he had been guided by his own personal belief. At times, there was an identity of views between Gandhiji and the Congress Working Committee, and at other times they held divergent views. The Congress Working Committee continued to meet to discuss that issue. The British Government brought a new proposal on August 8, 1940. The Viceroy declared that the first responsibility of the Indians was towards themselves, but they should also fulfil their responsibility towards Britain. At the same time, the minority view also should not be rejected. He said that a representative constitution making body would be set up after independence which would deliberate on the process of framing the Constitution of the country. He also stated that the Viceroy's executive Council would be expanded in the meantime, and a War Advisory Committee would be formed.

In view of that proposal, the Congress President Maulana Azad declined even the invitation to discuss the matter with the Viceroy. Pandit Nehru declared that the demand for constitutional right to self-determination had already been made. Rajaji was very angry over such talks. The reaction of the Muslim League and Jinnah was altogether different, because the constitution could not have been framed without the co-operation of the Muslim League. Rajaji saw the solution of the problem only in partition.

The Congress Working Committee met on August 18, 1940 at Wardha. The statement by the Secretary of State for India, Lord Amery, could not create any impact. The Congress Working Committee came to the conclusion that by rejecting the Congress proposal, the British Government was expressing its determination to rule the country only by force. Seeing that the situation was becoming critical, a session of the All-India Congress Committee was held on September 14, at Bombay. Maulana Azad declared during that session that Gandhiji had agreed to give active guidance to the Congress. The Congress Working Committee had agreed to the proposal that in view of the grave danger which the country had been facing, the All-India Congress Committee should request

Mahatma Gandhi to guide the Congress. Gandhiji declared that India did not wish that England should be defeated or humiliated in the war. He was ready to meet the Viceroy to clarify his position. Thus Gandhiji once again became the guiding force in the Congress.

Individual Civil Disobedience and Pandit Pant

The Congress Committees were instructed to withdraw all types of Civil Disobedience Movements in the interest of the new strategy. On October 13, the Congress Working Committee met at Wardha in the presence of Gandhiji. After two days of deliberations, Gandhiji announced that Vinoba Bhave would make the good beginning of direct action against the Government and for the time being, it would be limited only to him. But he said, everything would depend on how the Government reacted to it. According to Gandhiji's direction, Pandit Jawaharlal was to be the second satyagrahi. Initially, the constructive workers were to take part in it, to be followed by political workers.

This was Gandhiji's new strategy. On October 17, Vinoba Bhave made the auspicious beginning of the individual satyagraha by delivering an anti-war speech at Paunar. For three days, he went from village to village and aroused people's consciousness against the war. He was arrested on October 21 and was sentenced to three month's imprisonment. On November 7, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was to follow the line after Vinoba Bhave but he was arrested at Allahabad on October 31 itself. He was incarcerated in the Gorakhpur jail for four years.

The second phase of the individual satyagraha began in the middle of November. It was a satyagraha involving the representative leaders. Many members of the All-India Congress Committee and the Congress members of the Central and Provincial Legislatures were chosen for that purpose.

Sardar Patel was also arrested on November 17, under the Defence of India Act. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant announced his

decision to offer satyagraha on November 24, 1940, at Nainital. Pantji came out of his residence at Haldwani and addressed a public gathering there. He was arrested. Shri Lakshmi Chandra Jain I.C.S., sentenced him to a year's simple imprisonment and recommended that he should be kept in a 'first class cell'. Pantji was sent to the Almora jail for 15 days. Thereafter he developed some tooth trouble. The doctor tried to pull out his tooth but could not do it. He advised Pantji to give up chewing paan for that alone would give him relief from pain. He used to be an inveterate paaneater in those days. He also took Muradabadi tobacco with paan. It is always difficult to give up something to which one is addicted, especially chewing paan. But Pantji gave it up. Now he was free of his addiction and a true satyagrahi in terms of Gandhian standards.

As a measure of goodwill, Gandhiji suspended the satyagraha during the X-mas festival from December 24 to January 4. By that time, many leaders had been arrested in the country offering the satyagraha. Maulana Azad was arrested in January and sentenced to 18 months of imprisonment. He was the Congress President at that time. October 17, 1941, was the anniversary of the individual satyagraha and 20,000 persons had been sentenced for participating in it.

The situation of the world was taking a serious turn. In June the Germans attacked Russia. The Viceroy's Council was expanded in July and the Government set up the Indian Defence Council. Actually, those people were merely advisers without any administrative or ruling authority. The Secretary of State Lord Amery declared that the Viceroy's Council was a step in the direction of building the constitutional process. Mahatma Gandhi replied that Lord Amery had said nothing new and he had not understood India. By making that statement Lord Amery would neither help his country nor would he help India. By that time, Japan had also captured the Philippines and the surrounding countries. It had consolidated its position in Indo-China. It had become a grave danger to Malaya and Burma and the deployment of war materials available from India were a matter of life and death for Britain. The

British Government played a political game at that time and announced the release of all those who had symbolically participated in the individual Civil Disobedience Movement.

Pantji was released on November 17, 1941, and on November 19, his colleague Babu Sampurnanand was released from the Fatehpur Jail. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was in the Dehra Dun Jail at that time. Pantji went to meet him in jail on November 24, and for four and a half hours they discussed the current situation prevailing in the country and in the Province.

At Dehra Dun Pantji made a public declaration that the country was bothered neither about the Atlantic charter nor about the deceptive announcement by the Secretary of State for India, Lord Amery. On December 3, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru declared that the announcement by Lord Amery was like insult to injury. The satyagrahis started being released from jails all over the country.

On December 30, the Congress Working Committee met at Bardoli. During that meeting, discussions were held over a whole week on the current situation and happenings in the country. Gandhiji was adamant about the stand he had taken. He was against getting involved in the war under any circumstances. Sardar Patel, Babu Rajendra Prasad, Acharya Kripalani and Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ghosh supported Gandhiji. After some deliberations, a Committee was set up with Maulana Azad, Rajagopalachari, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Babu Rajendra Prasad and Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant as members. The Committee drafted a proposal through which it was declared that only the resolutions passed by the All-India Congress Committee on September 16, 1940 was the basis of the Congress policy even in the present situation. That resolution, while indicating the importance of the constructive programme, appreciated Gandhiji's leadership. Gandhiji was not prepared to make any compromise at all on the principle of non-violence. But finally, Gandhiji accepted the view that the Congress would help Britain in war efforts provided the British Government made a categorical declaration that India would be granted freedom at the end of the war.

The session of the All-India Congress Committee was held on January 15, 1942, at Wardha. Ultimately Gandhiji declared that it would not be reasonable to make any changes in the Congress policy. The world should be convinced that the All-India Congress Committee supported the policy of the Working Committee. He urged the members not to go with the feeling that there were differences within the Congress. He said that the Congress Working Committee had functioned like a happy family. He further said: "Some people say there are differences between Jawaharlal and me. There have been differences between us ever since I and Jawaharlal started working together. But I have repeatedly stated for years that not Rajaji but Jawaharlal would be my successor. Jawaharlal says that he does not understand my language and what he says is like a foreign language to me. That may or may not have been true, but the language that links the hearts cannot become an obstacle. But I know that after I am gone, Jawaharlal would speak my language." The resolution was unanimously passed.

Cripps Mission and Pandit Pant

The World War had taken a serious turn by that time. The Allied countries were facing defeat after defeat. The German armies had seized Moscow and Leningrad. Singapore and Rangoon had fallen. Japan had captured territories upto Burma. The Japanese armies were at the frontiers of India. On March 11, 1942, Churchill announced that Sir Stafford Cripps would visit India with a proposal and make an effort to see India rose in defence against the Japanese forces with all its might. Churchill described that proposal as very appropriate and practical. America also stood to gain by that proposal, because the American President Roosevelt had advised Britain to find a solution to the Indian problem in the interest of the Allied Powers.

Sir Stafford Cripps had visited India earlier also. He was one of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's personal friends. Sir Stafford Cripps started talks with the leaders on March 22, 1942. He consulted the

leaders of all political parties. The Cripps Mission had brought the proposal that India would be declared a Federal State. It was also proposed to grant India Dominion Status of a Commonwealth country. India would have the right to withdraw from the British Commonwealth any time it chose. After the end of the World War, a Constituent Assembly would be formed with the representatives of British India as well as the Princely states. However, there would be two conditions: one, any Province or Princely State which did not want to be bound by that constitution would be free to frame its own constitution and would have the same right to freedom like the Union of India. A compromise between the British Government and the Constituent Assembly would be considered and it would be concerned with the problems and responsibilities arising out of the transfer of power. The negotiations among the leaders started on March 25, and continued till April 10. Mahatma Gandhi took part in those deliberations not as a Congress representative but in his personal capacity. The Congress was represented by Maulana Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. But almost all the members of the Congress Working Committee were in Delhi in those days to co-operate with them.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was also engaged in that work putting in all his energy into it. Gandhiji described the Cripps proposal as the post-dated cheque and asked the Congress Working Committee to take its own decision about it. The Congress Working Committee was of the view that in principle, the Cripps proposal had accepted the Indian people's right to self-determination, but the time of its implementation was uncertain. However, the Congress rejected the Cripps proposal because it amounted to creating dissensions in the country. The proposal did not grant the right to self-determination to the exploited people of the Princely States.

Sir Stafford Cripps suddenly left India on April 12, while the talks were still on, because Britain was facing a somewhat tough situation during the War and Churchill desired the end of the negotiations in the light of that situation. That provided an encouragement to the Muslim League.

Quit India Movement and Pandit Pant

Sir Stafford Cripps failed in his mission. After his departure, Mahatma Gandhi declared that the Congress had rejected the Cripps proposal. He said that Sir Stafford had given in his plan the colonial status to India, to the utter disregard of its aspirations, and had made in it provisions that would lead to the vivisection of India. And that vivisection would probably be in three parts, each part independent of the rest, and guided by contrary ideas.

There was a mention of Pakistan in that proposal which was not to the satisfaction of the Muslim League. Moreover, defence of the country was not to be in the hands of responsible ministers. The Cripps proposal was detrimental to the freedom of India, because the British wanted to grant to India self-rule after the War and that too after truncating the country. On April 23, Rajagopalachari tried to muster support for his two proposals. His first proposal was that Pakistan should be accepted in principle and the second proposal was about having a responsible Government in the Madras Province. Gandhiji said that that would create turbulent situation in the Congress because it was generally believed that Rajaji had taken that line in view of the bait the Governor Lord Erskine had been holding before him.

The Congress Working Committee met at Allahabad on April 27, to discuss the resultant situation. Pantji attended that meeting. Apart from him, other leaders who took part in that meeting were Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Chakravarty Rajagopalachari, Babu Rajendra Prasad, Acharya J.B. Kripalani, Asaf Ali, Achyut Patwardhan, Bhulabhai Desai, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Sarojini Naidu, Vishwa Nath Das, Satyamurti, Jairamdas Daulatram and Gopinath Bardoloi. Mahatma Gandhi was not able to attend that meeting but he sent a proposal through Mira Behn for consideration by the Congress Working Committee. The salient features of that proposal were:

1. India has turned into a theatre of war because of British Imperialism.
2. We demand that the British grant us our freedom.
3. We require no foreign help to attain our freedom.
4. India has no quarrel with any country whatever.
5. In the event of Japanese aggression on India, we would offer non-violent resistance.
6. We would fight Japan even by non-cooperating with them.
7. The presence of foreign armies on the Indian soil is a great danger to the freedom of the country.

That proposal of Gandhiji came before the Congress Working Committee for consideration. It was a proposal on the failure of the Cripps Mission.

The reactions of the leaders to that proposal came to light through the papers confiscated by the Government at that time when it took possession of the Congress Office at Allahabad during the Quit India Movement and used subsequently to malign the Congress and finally published by the Government in "The Transfer of Power from 1942-1947". That proposal was discussed with open mind by the Congress Working Committee and Pantji took important part in the discussion. Some excerpts from that discussion:

Jawaharlal Nehru: "We must consider very carefully this proposal put forward by Gandhiji. Independence implies among other things withdrawal of the British army from India. This is appropriate, but is there any meaning in demanding the withdrawal of the army? Even if they (the British) agree to our freedom, would they be in a position to stand by it? The withdrawal of army and the

absence of a modern democratic machinery would create a vacuum in the country which would be impossible to fill. If we tell Japan that its fight is not against us but against the British, they would be happy over the withdrawal of the British. The Japanese would accept that we are free, but they would want certain facilities under the pretext of defending us against foreign aggression. They would want air bases and means of transport within the country to transfer the armies for our protection. They would say it is necessary for their self defence. Those soldiers would even capture places of strategic importance and proceed towards Iraq etc. They would say they would not harm the people of our country at all if their soldiers are in possession of strategic places. Japan is an imperialist country whose plans of conquering India are still the same. If we accept Bapu's proposal we become passive partners of the Axis Powers. This is an approach contrary to the Congress policy of the last one year and a half. It would give an impression to the Allied countries that we are their enemies."

Acharya Kripalani: "This proposal is a declaration of our situation. England and America may interpret in whatever way they like, the Congress is not against them."

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: "What is our stand? Should we tell the British to leave and allow the Japanese and the Germans to come here? Or do we wish this Government to continue and repel fresh aggression?"

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant: "I want the right to self-rule, and we shall use it in whatever way we choose. Let the British armies and other armies leave if they want. We shall fill that gap ourselves."

Jawaharlal Nehru: "Such a proposal weakens the position of the Government. They would treat India as their enemy and they would ruin the country. They would repeat what they have done in Rangoon."

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: "Gandhiji's proposal declares that Britain has proved itself incapable and inefficient from every

point of view. It is not defending India, nor is it allowing us to defend the country ourselves. But if the British leave, we would have our opportunity”.

Asaf Ali: “This proposal makes a demand on us that we accept non-violence for all time”.

Achyut Patwardhan: “It is Gandhiji’s view that the policy of non-violence is the most appropriate under the present situation and the Congress too can lend support to this policy.”

Jawaharlal Nehru: “In the context of this proposal, the whole world would suspect that we are actively joining hands with the Axis Powers. We are also asking the British to leave. After they leave we shall have to negotiate with the Japanese and it is possible that in the process we get widespread administrative control and to a certain extent military control may remain in their hands, so that their armies can conveniently enter from outside.

Acharya Kripalani: “Why should we take it to mean that we would have to make way for the Japanese armies? Just as we are asking the British to withdraw their armies, we are also demanding from others that they should keep their armies off our borders. If they do not do so, we shall offer resistance to them.”

Jawaharlal Nehru: “Whether you like it or not, maintaining our links with the Allied nations automatically means that India would be forced to participate in the war. In the interest of their self-defence, they cannot take the risk of remaining outside the borders of the country. They would pass through our borders and march onwards. You would not be able to stop them by non-violence and non-cooperation. And the majority of the population would not be affected by the movements of their armies. People may protest symbolically or in their individual capacity. The Japanese armies would march to Iraq, Persia etc. They would trample China and put Russia in a more difficult situation. Apart from other reasons, the British would reject our demand of freedom for military reasons.

They would not allow India to be used to Japan's advantage against their own interest. The reaction to not accepting this proposal would only be that in principle, we would be considered linked with the Axis Powers. All people outside the Allied countries would become our adversaries. There would be no occasion to resort to Civil Disobedience. So long as the basic programme is concerned, Bapu's proposal is alright. But its underlying idea and background give support to Japan. In the present situation, three basic ideas influence our decision:

- (1) India's independence
- (2) Sympathy for some high ideals
- (3) Who would emerge victorious at the end of the war?

Gandhiji thinks that Japan and Germany would win. Gandhiji's conclusion is indirectly influenced by this feeling. This proposal is against my line of thinking."

Achyut Patwardhan: "We are in agreement with Jawaharlalji's statement relating to the present situation. But there are some difficulties. The Government of India is following a suicidal course. If we do not take decision, Jawaharlalji's approach would lead to giving unconditional support to Britain, which we have to end at all cost. If India's war can be fought only by Wavell, then we would be doing something that would discredit us. We are talking about maintaining our relations with the Allied nations. I have my doubts about America being a progressive country. Is it not a fact that the American Army is stationed in India? Does it strengthen our position in any way? We had opposed the Poona agreement, but not the talks. Jawaharlalji is pained by the breakdown of the talks with Cripps. From what he thinks it seems that he wants to take up to a point where we would be compelled to unconditionally co-operate with Britain. Our co-operation amounts to inviting Japan to India."

Babu Rajendra Prasad: "Unless we accept Bapu's proposal, we won't be able to create the proper atmosphere in the country.

The Government has left no alternative for us. We can only fight without arms. That is why we must strengthen Bapu's hands."

Govind Ballabh Pant: "As far as non-violence is concerned, there is no ideological difference. However, there can be two opinions about the impact non-violence can have. Non-violence and non-co-operation are not meant for showing off. They are the means to resist aggression and fight against slavery. What is our view about military resistance.? Shall we help in this matter? Or shall we do nothing to stop the invading armies.?"

Jawaharlal Nehru: "Bapu's proposal differs from the attitude we have adopted with regard to the Allied nations. At least I have promised my total commitment and sympathy towards them. It would not be consistent with my self-respect to give up that stand. As far as resistance is concerned, there are some points in this proposal. The portion concerning minorities and prices is unreal. We have been thinking about what had been, but we do not think about what is there in fact. This is a dangerous trend in a dangerous situation which is changing so fast. But we have no difference at all on following points"

- (1) Our reaction to the present Government
- (2) Our inability to help the Government
- (3) Our programme of self-reliance and self-defence is helpful to the Government.
- (4) We are not obstructing Britain's War efforts, because that would mean helping the aggressors. We are agreed on these points, but we want to say it in a different way. My approach is different, hence, my ideas are also different."

Govind Ballabh Pant: "One way of examining this proposal is to think whether it is consistent with our earlier resolution. In the

matter of the denouement of the Cripps proposal, this language is highly biased. If that proposal was so bad, why did we spend so much time over it? Today my view is that we should do everything to defend our country, and we should bear many things. We are not co-operating with the British because it is not in accordance with our dignity. The approach adopted in this proposal makes every soldier our enemy."

Asaf Ali: "This draft would not make any powerful impact on the Axis powers. Asking the British to leave would do good to none."

Bhulabhai Desai: "No resolution is necessary. The resolution we have passed at Wardha expresses our definite position. This proposal is unrealistic. It is not in agreement with our earlier decision in which we had stated that if given the opportunity we would help the Allied nations."

Rajagopalachari: "I do not think that the changed proposal is different from the original proposal. We are approaching both to Japan and Britain. Our appeal to Britain would serve no purpose, but later it would bring some significant results. Entire Congress policy would be redefined and it would be against us. Yes, Japan would consider it the best policy. I do not believe that if the British leave, the psychological atmosphere in India would bring unity in the country. Would Japan fill that vacuum? We have to see that our anti-British feelings do not destroy our sense of reasoning. We should not be disturbed over trivials. We should not throw ourselves into the arms of Japan. And this proposal amounts to just that."

Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya: "This proposal is complete and appropriate. The time has now come that we carry it out ourselves. After rejecting the Cripps proposal, we should reconsider our situation and our attitude and state them clearly."

Sarojini Naidu: "The changed proposal is better than the original. It is true that it contains the terrible venom of our hatred and disrespect for the British Government. It is futile to make an appeal to Japan. India is part of the maps to be authorised by them. I am

in agreement with the portion dealing with non-violence or non-co-operation. It can be redrafted, keeping in mind the basic points of the original proposal. I do not want the presence of foreign armies. The portion in the proposal concerning that point is good."

Vishwa Nath Das: "We find two mutually opposite ideologies in the Committee. Differences of opinions at this juncture of time would be fatal. On the whole, I am in agreement with the proposal. If we accept the Cripps proposal, then Britain would keep us enslaved for all time to come. The provisions regarding representation asking the British to leave the country is absolutely appropriate. We can show to them that they can neither protect us nor give us an opportunity to protect ourselves. The entry of the American army on the Indian soil is not proper. We have to protest against it. They have brought into India armies from other colonies and from foreign countries. This is very dangerous."

Bardoloi: "One part of the proposal is concerned with implementation and the other with principles. If we lay stress on implementation, then there would be very little difference of opinion left. We should take away the theoretical portion of the proposal. Then there would be no difference of opinion. We are facing a dangerous situation. This is no time for theoretical discussions. We must confine ourselves to the present moment and that moment is concerned with nothing but non-violence and non-co-operation."

Satyamurti: "The changed proposal is better than the earlier one. I am not in agreement with those who protest against the entry of the foreign armies. I am ready to believe that we can defend ourselves with the help of the foreign armies. We should certainly be in touch with the Muslim League."

Achyut Patwardhan: "On the whole, I agree with the proposal. The proposal lays stress on the essential point which is acceptable to every intelligent person. The fight in which the people are not involved, would always end in defeat. This war is the war of

imperialism. Our policy should be not to take the side of any country at all. The world is in the grip of terror. We could think about the situation if the Allied countries are in a position to defeat the Axis Powers. But we can see very clearly that Britain is in a pitiable state. We want to remain neutral. We neither look up to Japan nor to Britain."

Jairamdas: "It is wrong to criticise this proposal saying that it is in favour of the Japanese. The proposal mentions our opposition to the Japanese aggression. The reference to the foreign armies in the proposal in the form of a resolution is appropriate. The history of India is full of testimonies about the unwanted victories by the foreign armies. This proposal creates an atmosphere of neutrality which is appropriate."

Sardar Patel: "It seems to me that the committee is faced with two different views. Only after the war started we have tried to seek unanimity of views. But at the present moment, that does not seem possible. Gandhiji has adopted a definite stand. If his stand appears appropriate to some, it does not seem appropriate to us. First four or five paragraphs are by way a reply to the Cripps Mission. Cripps is a very shrewed man. He has left saying that he has not failed. This proposal is a perfect reply to his propaganda. I am not in favour of having any talks with Jinnah. We have made repeated attempts and have been humiliated. Today the Congress is facing a two-fold attack. One is from Cripps and the other is from Rajaji's proposal which had done unprecedented harm. I have surrendered myself to Gandhiji. In my view, he is right. He has been guiding us every time we are caught in a difficult situation. There were ideological differences during the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay and the doors to negotiations had been closed. But it was made clear at Bardoli that the doors to negotiations were still open. Our sympathies are still with the Allied nations. After being repeatedly insulted, the time has now come to close finally the doors to negotiations. We are in agreement with the proposal. If there is anything in the proposal in favour of dictatorship, then that portion should be deleted from it."

Acharya Narendra Dev: "The objectives of Russia and China are not the same as those of America and Britain. Hence, I do not agree that this is a common war. And if it is not a common war, we should take part in it. We are not in a position to help all of them and awaken the national consciousness without doing that. Our situation is such that if there is a (common) war and there is evidence of it, we are ready to apply our strength in favour of democratic forces. It is necessary to refute the mischievous proposal of Cripps and our refutation should be widely publicized. Cripps says that compromise could not be reached because of internal differences. Rajaji has strengthened his hands. Danger from the Japanese side had influenced our attitude towards Britain and the Poona Resolution was accordingly amended. We must make it clear that we are not panic-stricken because of the Japanese danger. We can tell the British that they should quit leaving us to our own fate. Whatever unnatural we find in Indian politics is due to the British rule. Let the British rule end, and it would disappear by itself. I am not interested in defeating Germany. I am more interested in the aims of War and Peace."

Maulana Azad: "It has been a useful discussion. But we have not been able to clarify the views of the two sides. Much was expected from Cripps. He came here with the reputation of being a radical, but he proved to be thoroughly disappointing. He has spoilt the situation still further. At the end of the negotiations, he mentioned two things to hide his failure:

(1) His mission proved that the British Government's approach towards India has not been serious.

(2) It was possible to form the anti-Japan front because of his Mission. This is a false propaganda on his part. Great Britain made it impossible for us to defend our own country. But we are still capable of repelling the Japanese aggression. I am firmly convinced that for an enslaved country, nationalism is the greatest duty. If I would have felt that Japan is better than Britain and contravening is good for India, I would have publicly proclaimed it. But that is

not the case. Gandhiji's solution is the only alternative though I have doubts about its efficacy."

The proposal which Babu Rajendra Prasad presented did not have the approval of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and a few other members of the Working Committee. Hence, Maulana Azad requested Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to prepare a draft of his own. At the next meeting of the Working Committee, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru presented his draft even though Rajendra Babu's draft had been accepted at the meeting of May 1, in the morning. His draft included almost everything that Gandhiji said. It also contained Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's detailed analysis. The main points of that draft were:

(1) The Cripps proposal has given rise to more bitterness and distrust, so that there is a growing feeling in India that we should not co-operate with Britain. Even now the British Government is adopting an imperialistic stance and is rejecting India's demand for freedom.

(2) The British Government has forced the war on India without taking the people of India into confidence. India has no quarrel with any country. It has a number of times expressed its opposition to Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism. India wants to determine its policies independently. It wants to keep aloof from the war, but in every situation, its sympathies would be with the people who have fallen prey to aggression.

(3) Only an independent India can know how it would defend itself in the event of a foreign aggression.

(4) Because of its experience, India regards the presence of foreign armies on its soil as dangerous.

(5) The Congress believes that India would attain freedom by its own attempts and also defend it. The negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps have made it impossible for the Congress to accept any

proposal which may leave even the slightest scope for British control or authority on India. Not merely for the sake of India but for world peace, Britains' security and for the cause of freedom, Britain should withdraw itself from India. It is only on the basis of freedom that India can have relations with Britain or any other country.

(6) The Congress condemns the idea or feeling that India would become free on account of a foreign aggression or offering internal co-operation to a foreign country. If we are attacked we would offer resistance and that would be done by non-violence and non-co-operation. The British Government had prevented public co-operation for national defence. We would fight the aggression by non-violent means and refuse to co-operate with them in any way. We would neither fall on our knees before them nor accept their commands.

(7) The Congress expresses faith in the creative programme for fighting back foreign aggression and would follow that programme.

After passing this resolution, the Congress started making vigorous preparations for a new agitation under Gandhiji's leadership. Mahatma Gandhi was in full command of the situation and plunged into ceaseless preparation for the battle with an enthusiasm of a youth.

India's situation was very grave at that time. After the failure of the Cripps Mission, the people of India had expected that Britain would adopt a more generous stance and make fresh efforts. But the Secretary of State for India, Lord Amery flatly refused to pursue the matter with India after the failure of the Cripps Mission, and send another mission. This humiliating attitude on the part of Britain succeeded only in spreading feeling of resentment among the Indian masses.

At the same time the Japanese armies were advancing and the number of refugees coming to India from Penang, Singapore, Malaysia and Burma was swelling. And when the British forces

started retreating from Arakan and North-east regions, they discriminated inhumanly against the Indians in that frightful condition. They reserved the safer routes for the British and the Europeans and compelled the Indians to take the dangerous routes. Because of this discriminatory treatment, many Indian lives were lost. They fell victims to starvation, illness and premature death. This racial discrimination against the Indians by the British gave rise to feeling of ill-will and hatred. At the same time, it was a blow to the self-respect of the Indians. The Congress severely condemned this policy of discrimination and racial distinction between man and man.

The Japanese danger became all the more grave for India after the fall of Penang, Malaysia and Burma. The Japanese started bombing Calcutta, Madras, Vishakhapatnam, Kakinada etc. There was panic everywhere and people started fleeing those places. The Japanese ships started moving in the Bay of Bengal and it seemed that Britain was incapable of defending India. The people of India had lost faith in the Government. Prior to the Japanese aggression, Subhas Chandra Bose was in Berlin, and he was not only keeping account of the events happening in India and in the neighbouring territories, but he was also seriously pondering over them. Through his speeches over Radio and other means of communication, he was inspiring the people of India to revolt against Britain. Netaji Subhas Bose also extorted the people to support Japan in the interest of India's freedom and of building up a great Asia. The country had faith in his sacrifices and his patriotism. Even in the situation of that time, the deeds of the British were such that a large section of the people started leaning towards Japan.

That situation caused anxiety among the Congress circles. The Congress leaders felt that India's struggle for freedom would be caught in a vicious circle if they remained passive for a long time and continued to be without guidance. It was not the time to sit and relax, but to wake up and act and wage a judicious war for the attainment of our objective. In the same light, the Congress took the decision to launch an agitation. Shri Rajagopalachari was of the opinion that South India would be the first target of Japan. Hence

his line of thinking was different from that of the Congress leaders. He was keen to come to a compromise with Britain. But no compromise was possible till the Congress accepted the position of the Muslim League.

The Congress leaders were against Britain as well as Japan. Gandhiji had the responsibility of challenging Britain on the one hand, and prepare the nation to fight the Japanese aggression on the other. The Congress, Gandhiji and the whole nation rejected Rajaji's policies, because he was in favour of the vivisection of India and he had become isolated in the country and the Congress. Gandhiji believed that the British would behave in exactly the same way as they had done in Singapore, Malaya and Burma. He knew that Japan's military arrogance would be much more dangerous than imperialism of Britain. It was his opinion that if the British quit India, Japan may not invade India at all. Hence, if the British left India to its own fate, the non-violent India would have nothing to lose. Whatever the conditions may be, the safety of India lay only in the fact that the British left while there was still time. He wrote to Horace Alexander that it was his firm belief that the British should leave India. He wrote several articles in the *Harijan* in which he expressed his view on this subject. Day and night, he gave expression to his views, and outside the country kept the American President Roosevelt, Chiang-Kai-Shek etc. informed about the prevailing situation.

'Do or Die'

The Congress Working Committee met at Wardha on July 14, 1942, to decide upon a new strategy. During that meeting, Maulana Azad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Sayed Mahmud and Asaf Ali opposed Gandhiji's view. After deliberations, the differences between the two sides ended and a resolution was unanimously passed in which the British Government was asked to withdraw completely from India, failing which the Congress would be forced to start a non-violent campaign under Gandhiji's leadership.

On August 8, the All-India Congress Committee accepted the resolution of the Working Committee with an amendment. That resolution demanded immediate withdrawal of the British rule in India and Independence be declared as India's natural and inalienable right. It was also declared that for the attainment of that goal, a mass movement would be launched on a wide scale under Gandhiji's leadership. Addressing the nation, Mahatma Gandhi gave a brief *mantra* - "Do or Die" meaning that we would either make India free or die in the struggle to attain freedom. We would not be able to bear the yoke of slavery any more.

This session of All-India Congress Committee continued till 10 p.m. on August 8, 1942. The Government was keeping a close watch on the Congress and it was determined to let loose a reign of terror. Gandhiji gave a clarion call to start the struggle. However, within a few hours, at the dawn of August 9, 1942, most of the leaders were arrested in bed throughout the country. The members of the Congress Working Committee were arrested in Bombay itself. Babu Rajendra Prasad was ill and was not arrested at that time. The leaders arrested in Bombay at their residences were taken to an unknown destination by a special train from the Victoria Terminus railway station. They were kept in separate compartments and were isolated from Gandhiji. By the time the train reached the Poona railway station, the news of their being on that train had leaked out and people collected in such large numbers that the police had to resort to lathi-charge. Gandhiji and Smt. Sarojini Naidu were brought from the train to the Agha Khan Palace.

The train then reached Ahmednagar where the remaining leaders were imprisoned in the Ahmednagar Fort. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad, Sardar Patel, Acharya Kripalani, Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Shri Asaf Ali, Dr. Syed Mahmud and Shankararao Deo were kept in the Ahmednagar Fort. They were kept there in secret detention. Press censorship was enforced throughout the country. These leaders were completely cut off from the outside world.

That day, Pantji's arrest was altogether a different story. The police reached his residence to arrest him at the same time. But he behaved in the same way as he had always done all through his life. He took quite long to get ready and the police had to wait. His colleagues were deported by the train that night, but Pantji remained in the Arthur Road jail the whole day and later he was sent to the Ahmednagar Fort by car. His colleagues who were already there were worried about him.

Inhuman repressive measures were adopted all over the country, but the masses were awakened by the *mantra* of 'Do or Die'. The arrest of the leaders intensified the struggle for India's freedom. Everyone was prepared to 'Do or Die'. Students, mill workers, peasants, all took a plunge in the struggle. People sabotaged the railway tracks. They destroyed the means of transport. They uprooted the electric poles, thereby throwing out of gear, the whole network of telephones and telegraphs. The tricolour started fluttering on Government Buildings and police stations. People started taking control of the jails. In some places, like Balia, people even formed their own governments. Underground papers and bulletins started being published. As the movement gathered momentum, the British attitude hardened all the more and it became more barbaric. The machinery of repression moved very fast, and the British who were known to be barbaric resorted to repressive methods which is a horror story of brute force deployed to crush any freedom struggle in the history of India and the world is a blot on them.

The entire Congress was declared an illegal organisation. The Congress Offices were sealed, the Congress funds were confiscated everywhere and strikes were legally banned. Newspapers were prohibited from publishing the news about the agitation. The Provincial Governments were empowered to discharge from duty any local officials who showed leniency towards the agitators. The country had not expected to see so much repression. The masses were without any leader, but patriotism was guiding them. The whole country raised its triumphant voice through processions and

demonstrations. All laws were broken, the Government offices were boycotted. Students played a glorious role in this agitation. Schools, Colleges, Universities were closed. Factory workers also joined the agitation. Mills and factories closed down because of strikes. Although a large number of Muslims who were influenced by Jinnah kept themselves away from the agitation it was at its peak in the Eastern United Provinces and Bihar. National Government was formed in the valley of Assam. Women also participated in this agitation with men. The agitation subsided within a few months, but the fire of freedom burnt within the hearts of the Indian people. Leaders of the Congress Socialist Party like Jayaprakash Narayan, Ram Manohar Lohia, Achyut Patwardhan, Aruna Asaf Ali and others kept the flame burning from underground. The movement was crushed in the worst brutal manner.

Whatever it was, millions of people went to jail. Thousands lost their lives. Several thousand were condemned and there was shooting on more than 500 occasions. The Quit India Movement was the climax of India's freedom struggle. It was the final mass movement for winning freedom for India. In fact, it was an unusual mass uprising. Subhas Bose had declared Indian freedom struggle as a non-violent guerilla war. In this struggle for freedom, all distinctions of caste, religion, and race disappeared. It shook the foundation of the British Government in India and its deep-rooted imperial authority.

While all this was happening on the soil of the awakened country, all big leaders were in prison. Members of the Congress Working Committee were imprisoned at the Ahmednagar Fort. That historical Fort which was built in medieval times for security reasons was almost inaccessible. Many eminent persons who played important role in India's history had been imprisoned there in the past. Chand Bibi too had been imprisoned there. When the Congress leaders were brought to that Fort, it was in desolate state. They decided to bring life in it. They set about growing plants and flowers to make that place green. Thanks to their efforts, that barren land was soon covered with greenery. The leaders laughed and joked

among themselves. They passed their time in sports, reading and writing. They were not allowed to read newspapers or write letters at first. But later, they started getting the Times of India, the daily newspaper published from Bombay. They were also permitted to write letters to their relatives.

Pantji used to read a lot in jail. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was also very fond of books. Maulana Azad too was a man of learning and a keen student of history. Pantji used to play badminton for a couple of hours.

On February 10, 1943, Mahatma Gandhi went on a 21 day fast at the Agha Khan palace. The whole country was sunk in grave anxiety. That frail little man succeeded in his fast by sheer spiritual power and the nation heaved a sigh of relief when he broke the fast on March 3, by taking orange juice.

Pandit Pant used to write letters to his children from jail following the prescribed prison rules. These were very constructive and important letters that contained things in which Pantji's emotions found expression.

They also revealed his knowledge and sense of discretion. Pantji fell ill while he was in jail.

XIII

THE DAWN OF FREEDOM

THE GOVERNMENT OF India decided to send the leaders to their respective Provinces and soon implemented that decision. On March 31, 1945, Pantji was sent to the Bareilly prison. Pantji had a serious hernia trouble while he was in the Ahmednagar Fort. After his release, he went to Delhi, but the operation could not be done in view of his bad health. Pantji then went to Nainital from Delhi. While at Nainital, he was very much worried about his friends who had participated in the freedom struggle. That was the time when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Acharya Narendra Dev were sent to the Almora prison. Both of them were released soon after. As soon as they were released, they went to Nainital.

Lord Wavell went to London on March 21, 1945, for discussing political situation in India and returned to India on July 4. He issued a statement through a broadcast on All India Radio in which he declared that fresh attempts would be made to solve the political problem of India in the light of the earlier assurances made by the British Government. He also announced that for that purpose, the leaders of the Congress, the Muslim League and other political parties would be invited for talks at Simla. It was also announced that the Congress President and members of the Congress Working Committee would be released so that they could participate in the talks.

That very day, Pantji received a message from Lord Wavell through the United Provinces Governor, Sir Maurice Mallet that the statement made by the Secretary of State to India in the British Parliament would be published in the newspapers the next day and

he invited Pantji to participate in the talks to be held on July 25, at Simla. The message also contained a request to convey his acceptance telegraphically. Pantji sent a reply that he would convey his decision after consulting his colleagues. He also stated that he would be able to send the reply only after the Congress Working Committee meeting to be held on June 21.

Simla Conference

The Congress Working Committee met on June 21-22 at Bombay. By that time, all members of the Working Committee had been released. Pantji also attended the Working Committee meeting at Bombay. The Congress decided to take part in the Simla Conference. The Congress Working Committee was called again on June 24, at Simla. The Congress President Maulana Azad met Lord Wavell before the Conference and sought clarification on the subject of having all Indians on the Viceroy's Executive. Would the Government continue to follow the advice of the Executive Council? The Viceroy suggested that in the interest of the country, there should be an understanding between the Government and the Muslim League. Maulana Azad expressed his doubt about it. The British were now sure about their victory because Hitler had been defeated. In fact, they were wanting to present to the country the same old thing in a new form. However, Japan had not yet been vanquished. The Congress Working Committee met on June 24 at Simla. During that meeting clarification on some points was sought from the Viceroy. The Working Committee wanted to know if the Viceroy had the power to override a unanimous decision of the Viceroy's Executive.

The Simla Conference began at the scheduled time. The Conference was attended by the President of the Congress, the President of the Muslim League, representatives of the enumerated communities and the Sikhs, leaders of the Congress, the Muslim League, the Nationalist Party and the Europeans in the Central Legislative Assembly, leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League in the

Provincial Legislatures, Premiers of the Provincial Governments etc. Although there were differences between the Congress and the Muslim League from the very start, they were confined to a certain limit. On the second day, the two parties agreed on several points. The points on which there was agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League were: The Viceroy's Executive should continue to function till the end of the war; the minorities should be represented in the Viceroy's Executive and the Viceroy's Executive Council should whole-heartedly support Britain in the war.

However, the two parties differed on the question of the formation of the Executive Council. The Muslim League insisted on the selection of the Muslim representative only and wanted the Congress to represent only the Hindus. Maulana Azad, in his capacity as the Congress President, rejected that demand by the Muslim League and he declared that the Congress would join the Viceroy's Executive Council on a national, and not on a communal basis.

Jinnah desired to have further talks with the Congress on this point. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was chosen to represent the Congress for that purpose. In Jinnah's view, Pantji was a very shrewd and dangerous person. At the same time, he admired Pantji's great ability to carry on political negotiations. Jinnah also admired Pantji's efficiency, because at the time of the formation of the Pant Ministry in the United Provinces, Pantji had rejected the proposal of forming the ministry in collaboration with the Muslim League which insisted on choosing the Muslim members of the ministry. Pantji believed that he had been chosen to negotiate on such a serious matter because he was not prone to lose his temper easily, and listen to anything with great patience. However, the talks between Pantji and Jinnah broke down.

Lord Wavell called for a list of representatives of all political parties so that he could select the requisite number of members for his Executive Council. All political parties sent their respective lists of names.

The Congress also sent its list which included (among others) some Christians, Muslims and also Parsis. Jinnah took a stubborn stand saying the Muslim League would send its list only on its own terms. He threatened to boycott the Government if that demand was not accepted. Finally, on July 14, the Simla Conference ended.

Lord Wavell took upon himself the responsibility for the failure of the Simla Conference. Jinnah's obstinacy won the day, and it seemed that the Muslim League had the veto power with regard to the future Constitution of India.

The Congress Working Committee met again on September 14, at Poona where the latest situation was discussed. A few days later, a session of the All-India Congress Committee was held at Bombay. But before that Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945. The Allied powers did win the war, but it led to the change of the Churchill Government in Britain. Lord Clement Attlee was elected the British Prime Minister. He announced that general elections would be held in India in early 1946.

In November, the Azad Hind trials were held in the Red Fort at Delhi. The Congress session was held at Bombay, Gandhiji and many others were of the opinion that India had failed politically and it was time to engage in constructive work. There was another section of the people who was hopeful after the change of Government in Britain and was in favour of abandoning the idea of a starting a fresh agitation and taking part in the general elections instead.

In the Election Fray

The All-India Congress Committee decided to contest the elections. The Congress prepared its election manifesto in which it declared that it believed in giving equal rights and equal opportunities to every Indian whether it was a man or a woman. The Congress wanted to establish an independent democratic state. It believed that the country should have its own Constitution, in which its units

should enjoy sufficient autonomy. The Congress advocated adult franchise and declared itself in favour of establishing an international organisation of independent nations, as well as in favour of independence for the countries under foreign domination. The Congress also announced its economic policy. Along with this manifesto, the Congress also demanded the release of its political workers. The Government on its part released those prisoners.

The general elections were held in the country. In the United Provinces, apart from the Congress, the representatives of the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and many independent candidates stood for the elections, most of them were capitalists and big zamindars. The Muslim League was fighting the elections on communal basis. It provoked communalism and there were communal riots in many places.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru travelled all over the country for the elections. He took upon himself the entire responsibility of the Congress Movement, despite the violent incidents that took place in its course. He turned the political lethargy into an awakening. Pantji did a hurricane tour of the United Provinces for four days, addressing four or five public meetings on each day, and covering a distance of about one hundred miles. Once again, Pantji won the election from Bareilly, which included the Badayun, Pilibhit and Shahjehanpur districts. The Congress was victorious in the whole Province. In the whole country, with the exception of Bengal, Punjab and Sind, the Congress won everywhere. No party had majority in Sind. In Punjab, the Muslim League and the Unionist Party won equal votes. The Muslim League had a clear majority only in Bengal. The Provinces where the Muslim League won or where it had the credit of bringing victory to the majority candidates, were the Muslim majority Provinces. The elections were fought there on mainly communal grounds. The Muslim League was badly defeated in the North-West Frontier Province.

Cabinet Mission

On April 1, 1946, Pantji was elected the Chief Minister of the United Provinces. The condition of the country was not good at that time. The Cabinet Mission had already arrived in India. The Mission included the then Secretary of State for India, Lord Pethick Lawrence. Sir Stafford Cripps and A.B. Alexander. The Mission landed in India on March 23, 1946. The purpose of the Mission was to hand over political power to India for self rule. The Mission held talks with different political parties and its recommendations were published on May 16. The proposal of the Cabinet Mission were as follows:

- (1) India should be a republic which should include the British India and the Princely States. This Union would also enjoy powers in the matter of foreign affairs, defence and communications.
- (2) The Indian Republic would have administrative and legislative departments which would be coordinated by the British India and the Princely States.
- (3) Major communal problems would be solved by the representatives of both the big groups.
- (4) Except the Union subjects, other subjects would be under the jurisdiction of the Provinces.
- (5) The Princely States would have for themselves all those subjects and the related powers which they may not have surrendered to the Union of India.
- (6) The Provinces would have the freedom to form their own groups, Executives and Legislatures.
- (7) Any Province can seek recognition of those conditions by a majority vote in the Legislature, but it could do it

only after 10 years and subsequently, after each interval of 10 years.

- (8) As a rule, there would be representatives in the Constituent Assembly for the population of every 10 lakh. Representatives of different communities would be in proportion to the size of each community. At the same time, the procedure for framing the Constitution at the Provincial level was also mentioned.
- (9) Till the framing of the Constitution, the administration of the country would be carried on by an Interim Government.
- (10) There would be an understanding between Britain and the Constituent Assembly by which the problems arising in the wake of the transfer of power would be dealt with.

The main feature of this proposal was that it had to be either accepted or rejected in toto. The underlying concept in the proposal was a weak centre. The nation States had been given the right to either join the Union of India or remain out of it.

The division of the provinces had not been done on a rational basis and with any sense of discretion. Under the guise of national unity, the demand for Pakistan had been recognized in it. The Constituent Assembly had been given restricted powers. The provisions with regard to the Provinces were not clear. Nevertheless, the Cabinet proposal was somewhat better than the Cripps proposal. It had in it the concept of a United India and the scope of communal representation was limited. In the proposal, the basis for the formation of the Constituent Assembly was more broad-based and more democratic.

It had the provision for a completely Indian Interim Government. It had a more appropriate ground for compromise with regard

to all parties. The Muslims were given the opportunity to protect their own culture and tradition. The Sikhs were given the right to keep Punjab united. There was also the mention of complete Independence and also of the right of the Indian people to frame their own Constitution.

All the Congress leaders were busy discussing this proposal and Pantji played a special role in it. The Congress asked for certain clarifications from the Government regarding basis of the permanent Government, its form and character. It wanted to know if the Constituent Assembly would be sovereign. What was the purpose of the classification of the Province? The clarification with regard to the Constituent Assembly and the Interim Government was favourable to the Congress and it agreed to co-operate in implementing the proposal.

But the Muslim League opposed the proposal on the ground that it did not accede to the demand of a sovereign Pakistan. However, later on it accepted the proposal under protest. With the acceptance of the proposal by both these parties, an auspicious beginning of a new chapter in Indian politics was made. The Princely States were also in favour of accepting the proposal. The Sikhs opposed the proposal at first, but later accepted it.

Freedom and Jinnah

Mahatma Gandhi also complimented the Cabinet Mission for this proposal. The Cabinet Mission went back to London on June 19, 1946, and the Congress agreed to take part in the Constituent Assembly. The election to the Constituent Assembly took place in July. Out of 296 members of the Constituent Assembly, 213 members supported the Congress. Out of 210 general seats 119 went to the Congress. The Muslim League had 73 members in the Constituent Assembly. When the Congress refused to join the coalition interim Government, Jinnah tried hard to see that the Government was formed. But his attempts failed. On July 10, Pandit Jawaharlal

Nehru made a statement at a press conference: "We shall join the Constituent Assembly without being bound by any compromise. The Congress is free to alter and amend the plan of the Cabinet Mission".

Jinnah exploited this statement by Pandit Nehru in a dangerous manner and he refused to join the coalition Interim Government. On August 12, Lord Wavell invited Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to form the Interim Government. Pandit Nehru accepted the invitation, but the Muslim League refused to join the Interim Government.

In the meantime, the Congress passed a resolution to the effect that it supported the proposal of the Cabinet Mission so that the wrong interpretation of Pandit Nehru's statement by the Muslim League may be clarified.

The Muslim League started direct action in protest against this and observed August 16, 1946, as the Day of Direct Action. It declared outrightly that it was its greatest historic decision and that it was bidding good-bye to constitutional means. The Muslim League also exhorted the Muslims not to play in the hands of the enemies. It said that they were out to fight a war which had to be fought on all fronts, in every street and in every house. On August 16, there were unprecedented riots, massacres and holocausts all over the country. A *Jehad* was proclaimed at Calcutta and a huge procession was taken out and the miscreants played havoc. That Direct Action was not against the British Government, but against the Hindus.

Large number of innocent people were killed, so much so that even women and children were not spared. Property was looted and houses were razed to the ground. The Government looked on passively. It could not protect the people in distress. The Hindus mobilized themselves for self-protection. The Muslims also did the same as a reaction. According to one estimate, in Calcutta alone, 10,000 people were killed, 15,000 were wounded and one lakh became homeless. In places like Noakhali, the ire of communalism

spread like a forest fire. The same was the situation in Tipara, where the Hindus were in a minority. For several days, murders, rape, proselytization, loot and forced marriages were the order of the day. Administrative officers either looked on nonchalantly at all those happenings or they stood by the people who indulged in acts of barbarism. Thousands of refugees left Bengal and moved over to the neighbouring Bihar. As a reaction, communal fire raged even in Bihar and the Muslims were treated abominably. Army was called at Calcutta and the flames of communalism spread in the Western United Provinces as well. There was trouble at Ahmedabad and Bombay also. The result of the Direct Action was mob violence and communal passions raised their ugly heads everywhere in the country.

Jinnah took advantage of that situation and prepared the ground for the partition of the country in order to form the state of Pakistan. He even went to the extent of advocating the exchange of population. The enlightened people of India were astounded. The leaders were dumbfounded. The Government was nonplussed. Ultimately, on September 2, 1946, the Interim Government was formed in which the Muslim League participated. There were in all 12 members in the Interim Government, with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as the Deputy Leader.

Lord Attlee's Declaration

The first meeting of the Indian Constituent Assembly was held on December 9, 1946. According to the direction of Jinnah, the Muslim League completely boycotted the Constituent Assembly and declared the resolution passed at that meeting as illegal and invalid. The Muslim League was bent upon forcing the British Government to accept its demands on its communal strength by arousing communal passions under all situations by adopting all means. Lord Wavell was unable to remedy that situation.

The British Prime Minister Lord Clement Attlee pondered over the whole situation and on February 20, 1947, declared in the British House of Commons:

The British Government would transfer power to India. The British Government would decide itself to whom it would hand over the power on the decided date. Keeping in view the interests of India, the power would be handed over to the Central Government which would have a specific character and form, to the British India or in some areas to the Provincial Government and the Princely States. The authority of handing over the power to the Indians was given to the Viceroy. It was expected of the Viceroy that he would transfer the power on a definite basis decided by the Constituent Assembly, and without coming under the pressure of the concerned parties. The Viceroy was asked to give his report with this regard by October 1, 1947. He was instructed that he should win confidence and co-operation of the people of India so as to effect a peaceful transfer of power.

Prime Minister Attlee's declaration was universally well received. Not only Pandit Nehru welcomed the declaration, Mahatma Gandhi also praised it. Mohammed Ali Jinnah also saw in it his dream of Pakistan coming true.

Lord Mountbatten came to India on March 22, 1947. The moment he arrived, he promptly started the process of exchanging views with the Indian leaders belonging to all political parties. He met Mahatma Gandhi, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and other leaders. Lord Mountbatten had known the Indian leaders before. He was an expert in the field. He was sweet-tongued and a diplomat with influential connections with the royal family. He was an administrator and a leader. His plan also included the suggestion that in the interest of India, Jinnah should form his Cabinet. But Mohammed Ali Jinnah insisted only on Pakistan. By completely rejecting Lord Mountbatten's suggestion, he turned the situation to his advantage. Lest the dream of India's freedom got further

entangled in that situation and again receded further and new complications arouse, Pandit Nehru, after consulting his colleagues, accepted the fact that there was no alternative to accepting Pakistan for the sake of freedom of India. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel also gave his consent to that position. Both of them consulted Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant also on this matter.

This matter continued to be discussed for several weeks within the Congress and outside. On June 14, 1947, the All-India Congress Committee accepted the proposal of the partition of India. It was a very hard decision. For the Indian leaders who had made tremendous sacrifices for the freedom of India, it was like drinking poison. Even the people did not like it at all. But all other roads for attaining freedom for the country were blocked. That stubborn decision of Jinnah was like Kaikeyi's intransigent demand (for the banishment of Rama to the forest). The nationalism that marked the freedom struggle of India bowed before the cruel communal and nationally detrimental decision of the stubborn Jinnah. The Congress had to accept Jinnah's demand because of its keen desire for freedom for the country. In a situation that was extremely difficult and people had to be persuaded to accept an unpleasant and very bitter decision, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was regarded as the only successful leader who could carry out that task. Pandit Pant placed the proposal before the Congress. Sardar Patel and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru supported it. Gandhiji also blessed it whole-heartedly. Ultimately, despite the opposition by the Congress Socialists, the resolution was passed.

Lord Mountbatten was making all efforts to succeed in his objective. He continued discussions in England for many weeks to find a solution to the problem. After consultations, Lord Mountbatten came back to Delhi on May 30, 1947. Soon after his return, he made a declaration about his plan on June 3, 1947. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Jinnah and Sardar Patel gave their approval to the plan, which meant that the country was to be divided into two sovereign states. The basic points about the partition plan were:

- (a) The work of the Constituent Assembly would proceed uninterrupted, but the provision of that Constitution would not be applicable to those parts of the country which did not wish to accept them.
- (b) Two methods would be accepted to discern the wishes of the different parts of India with regard to the Constitution of India. They would be discerned either by the existing Constituent Assembly or the succeeding Constituent Assembly in which there would be representatives of those parts of India which do not wish to participate in the present Constituent Assembly.

This arrangement was with regard to the Centre. For the Provinces and the Princely States, the Mountbatten Plan had the following provisions:

- (a) The Legislatures of Punjab and Bengal would be bifurcated. One part would consist of the representatives of the Muslim majority districts while the other part would have the representatives of the rest of the districts.
- (b) The Sind Province would participate in the proposed Constituent Assembly in the light of the decision of its Legislature.
- (c) In the North-West Frontier Province, the decision would be guided by public opinion.
- (d) In Baluchistan, the Viceroy would decide the manner of determining the public opinion.
- (e) In some parts of Punjab and Bengal and the Sylhet district, there would be elections for the Constituent Assembly and its decision would be final.

- (f) The Princely States would have the right to remain independent or join either Pakistan or India according to their wish.

All major political parties of the country had accepted the plan. Hence, the British Parliament accepted the Indian Independence Act on June 18, 1947. It provided for the division of India into two parts which would become independent states on August 15, 1947. That was what ultimately happened. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru became the first Prime Minister of Independent India and Lord Mountbatten its first Governor-General.

BUILDER OF UTTAR PRADESH

THE CONGRESS WON the elections in the United Provinces in 1945 under the leadership of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant. He won more than 96 percent votes and formed his Government in the Province. Dr. Kailashnath Katju, Dr. Sampurnanand, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Smt. Vijayalakshmi Pandit and Muhammed Ibrahim, -- his old colleagues -- were the members of his cabinet. In other words, he formed the Cabinet with his colleagues of 1937. During that period, Sir Maurice Hallet who was a tyrant as the Governor of the United Provinces, had departed and Francis Willie had been appointed in his place. It was at his invitation that Pantji became the Premier of the United Provinces, and he was asked to form his Cabinet.

The United Provinces had been facing a terrible food scarcity at that time. The Government had before it the very difficult task of protecting the people from the frightful famine conditions. The moment Pantji accepted the responsibility as the Premier, he declared that the shameful state of affairs under Sir Maurice Hallet's rule was over; but his misdeeds would forever be a matter of shame for the British Government. He said that the hour of freedom of the country was drawing near and it was time to serve the people with dedication in order to live up to their faith.

Pantji at once engaged himself in the constructive work of serving the people. He concentrated his attention on the critical economic condition of the Province. The people were shattered by poverty and famine as well as the riots during the agitation for attaining Pakistan and the impending hardships of the partition of India. Pantji assured the people throughout the Province to give up

their fears and promised them to provide food, clothing and work to the best of his capacity. He made continuous service the ideal to be followed by his Government. The Government of the Province set up two lakh co-operative societies for the improvement of economic conditions of the people so that they should stand on their own legs. His Government also made plans for development of the villages. When he was a member and the Chairman of the Nainital and Kashipur municipalities, he had strongly advocated compulsory primary education, because he considered reading and writing a permanent treasure of the people of the country. Hence, he announced that sixty thousand primary schools would be opened throughout the Province for the spread of education. It was a revolutionary step in the field of education. All political prisoners were released within a matter of four days. The orders of eviction of the landless peasants on account of their arrears of government dues were withdrawn throughout the Province.

Soon after Pantji took up the reins of power in the United Provinces, terrible riots broke out in Aligarh in which undesirable elements of the Aligarh University and some communalist Muslims had a hand. He did not take time to bring even that situation under control. In the meantime, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai went to the Centre as a Minister and G.B. Pant became a dominant force in the politics. But Pantji was unconcerned and he kept out of those scrambles and ruled the Province with concentrated attention. The United Provinces happened to be the largest Province of the country. Pantji always kept that largeness in mind, so that its standard would be kept up from all points of view.

Everyone believed that only a capable person like Govind Ballabh Pant could manage the affairs of such a vast Province. On the one hand, he was the trusted man of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and on the other hand Babu Purushottam Das Tandon also regarded him as his man. C.B. Gupta also had faith in him. The administration of the United Provinces was full of innumerable obstacles during that same period. Systematic groupism had started within the party. However, Pantji had a remarkable capacity to take everyone along

with him. In 1950 Pandit Nehru wanted to use Pantji's abilities at the Centre by appointing him the Finance Minister. Pandit Nehru tried very hard, but Pantji explained his position and finally convinced Pandit Nehru to accept his decision about not going to the Centre.

The Changed Circumstances

After Independence, the Congress was on a new ground. So far, the Congress had been a social and political force which had carried on the struggle for Independence under Gandhiji's leadership. It was a force which had attracted people of all ideologies who believed in fighting for freedom and supported the struggle. Compared to what it was in 1885 at the time of its birth, had now acquired an altogether different, a new form and ideology. So far, the Congress had been a political platform for freedom struggle. But now, the situation demanded that it should develop itself as a party, because democracy requires a party government in which parties and their performances have a special importance. Those circumstances lend it the form of a party. Gandhiji suggested winding up the Congress once the country became free and changing it into a body devoted to public service and to the propagation of the constructive programme. But Pandit Nehru regarded the country and the Congress as synonymous. For him, the Congress was not merely a political platform but a regulating means for *sadhana*, to bring about social and economic revolution in the country.

Even during the days of foreign domination, truth and non-violence had become for the Congress a basis for social change under Gandhiji's leadership. Now from political point of view, its usefulness lay in transforming itself into a body that would run the Government of the country and consolidate democracy, and thereby, make it an effective instrument for the uplift and building of the India. The Congress was one of the oldest parties which the people had loved all along. The Congress possessed a character of its own and had the capacity to change itself according to

circumstances. Its activities covered the range from local to international levels. It had always proceeded on the basis of definite principles and philosophy. Generally, it decided its ideas and opinions on the basis of mutual agreement. It was thus the common platform of different nationalist ideologies. Hence, through the Congress, a balanced ideology had emerged like the water of a river flowing through the current of life. The Congress had given birth to the ideas of nationalism and freedom and it was India's good fortune that after Independence, it came to rule the country. In fact, it was the only nationalist party of All-India importance in the real sense of the term.

The period from the time of Independence till Pandit Nehru lived, that is, from 1947 to 1964, can be called the Nehru era. He diverted the Congress from the path of agitation and gave it a new constructive direction in independent India. Through the establishment of democracy in independent India the Congress grew as a vehicle of activities of public welfare. Despite the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi, it was decided that the Congress should continue to remain active as a political party in independent India.

The country had attained political freedom. But it was necessary that the Congress played its role in the life of the nation in order to take the country towards the attainment of moral, social and economic freedom. The old Congress was infused with a new vigour by adopting new articles of faith, new programmes and new constitution, so that the common people should enjoy the benefits of freedom and equal rights and march toward upliftment and progress.

The Congress had brought Independence to the country and now there was the attraction of political power. This led the elements aspiring to have their berth in the political power also started joining the Congress from time to time. Pandit Nehru was the supreme leader of the Congress till 1964 when he passed away. Essentially, he was an idealist who propagated the ideas of socialism, secularism, democracy and modernity. Under his

leadership, the Congress could always keep itself in power by winning the elections. But due to Pandit Nehru's generosity, discipline within the party slackened. Nevertheless, that period has been recognized as the Nehru era in the history of India.

The Nehru era can be divided into three parts: upto the framing of the Indian Constitution (1947-1950), Chinese aggression on India (1962) the period from 1962-1964.

Till 1950 Pandit Nehru enjoyed remarkable influence in Indian politics and his image was installed in the hearts of the people. He truly guided and controlled the life of the whole nation. Mahatma Gandhi had been assassinated on January 30, 1948. Among colleagues of Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel was a strong and able person with an iron will who exercised great influence and he was a past master in the matter of organisation. Pandit Nehru guided the destiny of the nation. While he established a position for India in the international field by making efforts to bring about peace and goodwill for the humanity afflicted by the World War and championing the cause of freedom for the nations under foreign domination, Sardar Patel became a symbol of great courage and strength by merging the Princely states with the Union of India. He was the iron man of India. Although Sardar Patel differed from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the matter of ideals, principles, temperaments and ways of functioning, he was always complementary to Pandit Nehru. Even when there were great differences between them, Sardar Patel never ceased to believe that Pandit Nehru was like the moon in Indian firmament and he himself was like a star.

Both of them together did such solid work of nation-building by their mutual co-operation that India acquired a position of great respect among the free nations of the world. Pandit Nehru's leanings were towards socialism, whereas, Sardar Patel was a conventional, strong-willed Congressman. By their working together harmoniously, they established the Congress of mixed ideologies. Right from the time of Independence, the people belonging to the rightist and leftist ideologies were trying to take the

Congress along their respective paths. However, there was a somewhat odd and at the same time harmonious atmosphere. If Pandit Nehru was the Prime Minister who held progressive and socialist views, as the President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad was an Indian leader who was a traditionalist.

The politics of the United Provinces was split in several groups at that time. But Pantji was above group politics. Like Sardar Patel, he regulated and directed behaviour and actions (of his colleagues). He had great faith in Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru because he believed that it was only Pandit Nehru who could lead the country.

There were many ideologies and many groups in the United Provinces Congress at that time. In 1948, Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai wanted to contest for the Presidentship of the Provincial Congress Committee of the United Provinces. Seeing that his position was not strong enough, he took a neutral stand. The new ministry of the United Provinces consisted of six old members like Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Vijayalakshmi Pandit etc. But in August 1948, Pantji included three more members in his ministry. They were Chowdhury Girdhari Lal, Hukum Singh and Nissar Ahmed Sherwani.

Around the same time, Lal Bahadur Shastri, C.B. Gupta, Keshav Dev Malaviya, Atma Ram Govind Khair and Chowdhury Charan Singh were taken in the Government of the United Provinces. Chowdhary Charan Singh was taken as Secretary, Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and Dr. Kailash Nath Katju were taken in the Central Cabinet by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Pantji formed his ministry on the brilliant qualities of the legislators and their work and not from the point of view of giving representation to the parties. That was the reason why top leaders of the Provincial Congress was with him in the Government. Pantji had done all that with a sense of detachment. The groups within the Provincial Congress at that time used to be contended. Nevertheless, power politics still resorted to groupism. Members of the Cabinet started finding fault with one another in private. In the Congress, those ministers who were loyal to Rafi Ahmed Kidwai expressed great discontent. Ultimately, on

July 24, 1951, Keshav Dev Malaviya and Jagan Prasad Rawat resigned from the ministry because of their differences. Those who resigned from the ministry were under the influence of Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and considering themselves progressive, sided with him. Krishna Dutt Paliwal, Ajit Prasad Jain, Keshav Dev Malaviya, Govind Sahay, Jagan Prasad Rawat, Triloki Singh etc. were basically with Rafi Ahmed Kidwai. This groupism in the Congress grew day by day. Shri C.B. Gupta formed another group in the United Provinces. He was also a guiding force in the politics of the Provinces.

This group politics grew to such an extent, that with the blessings of Sardar Patel, Babu Purushottam Das Tandon won the Presidential election against Acharya J.B. Kripalani, who had the full support of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. People started getting the impression that it was the defeat of Pandit Nehru and triumph of the forces of status quo and revivalism. Pandit Nehru's colleagues prepared him for confrontation. The situation was further aggravated by the rigid policy of Babu Purushottam Das Tandon. It was impossible for any political party to function democratically without giving due respect to the Prime Minister and offering appropriate suggestions.

On September 15, 1950, Pandit Nehru made a categorical statement at the time of the Congress session at Nasik that there were differences in the Congress resulting from two different ideologies. Although the other side supported Pandit Nehru, he knew at heart that it was not a genuine acceptance of his principles and ideals. Rather, it was a political manoeuvre. In view of the imminent general elections, Pandit Nehru thought it appropriate to clarify the situation with regard to ideology and organisation of the Congress. He resigned from the Congress Working Committee. In December 1950, Sardar Patel died. After his death, his followers were without any leaders and they were at a loss. Finally, Babu Purushottam Das Tandon had to resign from the Congress Presidentship. Now the reins of power were fully in Pandit Nehru's hands and the Congress organisation had full faith in him.

No one had any doubt about Pantji's faith in Pandit Nehru. But in view of his seniority, some people close to Pandit Nehru considered him an obstacle in their way. Pandit Nehru was Pantji's close friend and his leader. Groupism in the Congress made Pantji very unhappy. During that time, Pandit Nehru offered to take Pantji in the Central Cabinet. Pantji wrote a personal letter to Pandit Nehru on May 3, 1950, in that connection. In that letter he wrote: "There is no doubt that I feel the need for change. And I am really not very happy here. I have always been prone to struggle even with myself and I agree I have never lost confidence in myself. But now I am not ready to undertake any other responsibility. Although I cannot relinquish my present post, I have often had a desire to free myself of it. This desire cannot be fulfilled by giving up the present post and take up another. In the present circumstances, I could be more useful if I am not given a new responsibility."

Pantji made his position very clear to Pandit Nehru. He said that if he continued to occupy any position, it would be only the position he had been occupying at that time. Otherwise, he would prefer to be free of all governmental responsibility. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru pressed Pantji to reconsider his decision. But Pantji was firm. He replied from Nainital to Pandit Nehru's pressing request on May 15, 1950. He made it clear that even though he had no personal difficulties, it was imperative that he respected the wishes of the people in their interest so long he did not voluntarily withdraw himself from them. He said that by continuing in the position he had been holding, he would be able to give more benefits to the people. He also said that whatever his own personal view may be, he would ultimately abide by Pandit Nehru's decision.

Pantji's opponents in Delhi stopped their activities. Even though it was decided that Pantji should continue to remain the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, some people believed that it was Rafi Ahmed Kidwai who had been opposing Pantji in Delhi. However, Kidwai was among Pantji's close friends and he maintained family relations with him. There came a time when Rafi Ahmed Kidwai got widespread changes made in the list of the Congress candidates

which Pantji had prepared for the Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh. Many important names were changed.

At the time of taking the final decision, there was an exchange of views among Pantji, Maulana Azad and Pandit Nehru. Pantji presented the new list of the candidates. He said the list was all right. He added that by leading those candidates to victory, he would definitely help the Congress in forming the Government. But he added that he had been in politics much too long and now he wished to take rest. Hence, the only change he had made in the list was to delete his own name. Maulana Azad told Pandit Nehru that Pantji was unwilling to be the Chief Minister. As was his nature, Pandit Nehru got furious "What's the matter, Pantji?" Pantji said: "Maulana is right. If I cannot have the team of my choice, how can I be expected to lead the team chosen by others?"

On the other hand, the supporters of Rafi Ahmed Kidwai thought that they had scored a victory. But in the end, Maulana Azad had to accept in toto Pantji's original list.

Pantji had his own way of forming his team. He knew everyone in the United Provinces, but for appointing commissioners in different areas, he depended on his reliable colleagues who were above the machinations of party politics.

Even before this, changes were taking place in the Congress in terms of ideologies and persons. Even though Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was a socialist himself, people belonging to the socialist group in the Congress were against the partition of India from the very beginning and he felt that the image of Pandit Nehru as an upholder of the status quo was dominating the Congress. That group was led by Acharya Narendra Dev, Jayaprakash Narayan, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia etc. The Socialist leaders wanted to build their own groups within the Congress but the Congress Working Committee did not give the permission. Hence the Congress Socialist Party was formed as an independent body. As a matter of principle, Acharya Narendra Dev, resigned from his membership in the Provincial

Legislature. A section of the Congressmen was of the view that Acharya Narendra Dev should be allowed to win unopposed. Many Congressmen did not even join the propaganda against Acharya Narendra Dev. But in pursuance of the Congress policy, Pantji threw himself in election work with full force against Acharya Narendra Dev who lost the election in his home constituency of Faizabad. Acharya Narendra Dev was Pantji's classmate, but Pantji felt that when any person, however big, stood against the Congress, he should be defeated on public platform even while maintaining good personal relations. In that sense, he did not compromise and showed no generosity. He was a leader who was completely loyal to the party. The Socialist Party was established in 1948 and it set up its own candidates in the elections in the United Provinces.

In 1950 after the defeat of the Congress President in the election against Babu Purushottam Das Tandon, a democratic front was organized within the Congress which included Acharya J.B. Kripalani, Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, Sri T. Prakasam and Kailappan. The Congress Working Committee did not permit the formation of any other front within the Congress, and Acharya Kripalani was directed to disband that group. Those people paid no heed to the Congress high command and formed the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party as an independent body. Later, Triloki Singh and other leaders of the United Provinces also joined that party. When Acharya Kripalani organised a democratic front within the Congress, a complication arose-Rafi Ahmed Kidwai was in the Central Cabinet and he was also on that front. The question was about his being in the Central cabinet while he belonged to the party which had been formed in defiance to the decision of the Congress Working Committee. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru constantly urged Babu Purushottam Das Tandon to take Rafi Ahmed Kidwai in the Congress Working Committee to avoid trouble. But Babu Purushottam Das Tandon did not budge from his position, because he believed that the Congress President had the full authority to nominate members of the Congress Working Committee. Not only that, on July 22, 1951, Babu Purushottam Das Tandon also

criticized Pandit Nehru for continuing to have Rafi Ahmed Kidwai in his Cabinet. Under these circumstances, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai resigned from the Central Cabinet and joined the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party.

Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai was Pandit Nehru's close friend. Pandit Nehru felt that it was a despicable attempt to coerce him and malign his public image. Hence, Pandit Nehru resigned his membership of the Congress Working Committee on August 11, 1951. The situation then took such a turn that on August 29, Babu Purushottam Das Tandon himself had to resign as the Congress President, and on September 17, 1951, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai rejoined the Congress with his colleagues. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai wanted that the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party should merge with the Congress, but Acharya Kripalani and his colleagues did not agree with Kidwai and they continued to play their political role through the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party. This party also entered the election fray in the United Provinces.

Pantji had got his list of election candidates approved by the Congress Parliamentary Party. Now the election campaign in the United Provinces had warmed up. Not only elections to the Provincial Legislatures but also to the Lok Sabha were being held simultaneously. Many veteran leaders from the Central Government and several office-bearers of the Congress were fighting the elections in the United Provinces. Among them were also leaders like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai who did not share Pantji's views. Along with other parties, the Socialist Party and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party were also active in the elections. Those two parties had entered the election fray after separating themselves from the Congress. The zamindars were enraged because of the Congress policy of eradicating the zamindari system in the United Provinces. They had established the Praja Party and had put up candidates for the elections to protect their interests.

By that time, the Jana Sangh had also come into existence. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee had resigned from the Central Cabinet

because of his differences with it and established a party called the Jana Sangh. The Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh, which had also entered the election field, was also with it. It was against the Congress policy of appeasing Pakistan and wanted the Indian politics to be based on the tenets of Hinduism. They wanted to reap advantages for themselves by blaming the Congress squarely for the formation of Pakistan. Swami Karpatriji, the great exponent of the orthodox Hinduism also raised the cry of Rama Rajya and established the Rama Rajya Parishad. That party also set up its candidates for the elections. Apart from these parties, the Communist Party, Forward Bloc, Scheduled Caste Organization etc. also set up their candidates.

The greatest democratic election of the world was being held on the basis of adult franchise. There were 35,000 polling booths all over the United Provinces. 1.25 lakh employees were engaged in the election work and 50 per cent electorates cast their votes in that election. The United Provinces had 86 seats in the Lok Sabha and 430 seats in the Legislative Assembly. For the Lok Sabha elections, there were 364 candidates including the independents and members of various political parties. For the Assembly elections, there were 2,604 candidates in the field. The Congress was contesting all the seats. Despite ill health, Pantji worked hard day and night for the victory of the Congress candidates. The Congress won 81 seats in the Lok Sabha and 390 seats in the Assembly. The Opposition won 5 and 40 seats respectively. The Socialist Party was the largest Opposition party in the Assembly with 19 seats. In the United Provinces where Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Sri Prakash, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Feroze Gandhi etc. won the Lok Sabha elections, veterans like Acharya Kripalani, Smt. Sucheta Kripalani, Hridaynath Kunzru were defeated.

On May 19, 1952, Pantji took an oath as the Chief Minister. His colleagues in the Cabinet also took the oath. Before this, during Pantji's tenure as the Chief Minister, Smt. Sarojini Naidu and Homi Mody had been the Governors of the United Provinces. Now

Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi was the Governor there. When Pantji formed his ministry in 1946, his Cabinet, including the Secretary, had 21 members of whom eight were of the Cabinet rank. They were: Dr. Sampurnanand, Hafiz Mohammed Ibrahim, Hukum Singh, Girdhari Lal, C.B. Gupta, Chowdhary Charan Singh, Ali Zahir and Har Govind Singh. Three new ministers included in the Cabinet were Bichitra Narayan Sharma, Kamlapati Tripathi and Mohan Lal Gautam.

Pantji kept for himself the Departments of General Administration and Planning. Dr. Sampurnanand was in charge of Home and Labour; Hafiz Mohammed Ibrahim and Hukum Singh were in charge of Rehabilitation and Industries; Girdhari Lal was given the Public Works Department; C.B. Gupta had Food and Health; Charan Singh had agriculture and Revenue; Ali Zahir had Law and Excise; Har Govind Singh was given the charge of education and Harijan Uplift, Bichitra Narayan Sharma had Transport and Communications; Kamalapati Tripathi was in-charge of Information and Irrigation and Mohan Lal Gautam was in charge of Local Self-Government.

Almost the same arrangement continued till Pantji remained in Uttar Pradesh. Right from the beginning, it so happened that all the colleagues whom Pantji chose as his ministers, remained with him till the end. He chose his ministers on the basis of their abilities and qualities. The stable Cabinet is the sign of his strong administration and its own stability.

PANTJI AT THE CENTRE

IT WAS THE second phase of Pandit Nehru's administration as the Prime Minister. So far, he had been the supreme leader of the Congress in the country. His foreign policy had started becoming beneficial and was being appreciated throughout the world. He was busy rebuilding the country through planning. At the same time, because of his efforts, the principles of Panchsheel were announced in 1954. He was being recognized as a leader of the Third World and was being regarded as the spokesman of the countries that had recently become free and a supporter of freedom of the countries that were still under alien rule.

Within the country, Pandit Nehru wanted fast social and economic changes, but the process was slow compared to what he expected. Hence, he made continuous efforts to take the Congress speedily towards socialism. In the meantime, India's defeat in Sino-India war in 1962 adversely affected his strength and power. Nevertheless none in the country still dared to openly challenge his authority.

Rafi Ahmed Kidwai passed away in October 1954. Pantji like before was unwilling to leave Uttar Pradesh. But Pandit Nehru felt that the country could not do without Pantji's co-operation. He needed an expert, efficient and dedicated colleague like Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant.

On the one hand, the communal and disruptive elements were already creating problems in the country and on the other hand, Pandit Nehru's responsibilities in different fields were becoming

increasingly heavy. He had become extremely busy in international affairs and needed somebody of Sardar Patel's calibre who could handle and control the internal affairs of the country with discretion and efficiency, so that he could attend to other things with a free mind. Pandit Nehru sent a letter to Pantji through a special envoy on November 9, to the effect that he should oblige him by lightening the burden of his responsibility by joining the Central Cabinet. This time, Pantji responded to the request positively and agreed to abide by Pandit Nehru's order.

Everyone from the ministry to the people in Uttar Pradesh was agitated on his decision. The people did not want Pantji to leave Uttar Pradesh. They regarded Pantji as the builder of modern Uttar Pradesh and aspired for his continued leadership. However, on December 1954, Pantji's appointment as a member of the Central Cabinet was announced and he resigned as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh.

The Uttar Pradesh Assembly met on December 2, when a resolution was moved to the effect that Pantji's going to the Centre was not in the interest of Uttar Pradesh and it urged the Prime Minister to reconsider his decision. It was also decided to send a delegation of seven legislators to Delhi.

An emotionally charged atmosphere prevailed in the Congress Legislative Party of the Province, but even in that atmosphere Pantji displayed his equanimity as a leader. He told the members that he had already agreed to Pandit Nehru's request and it was impossible for him to go back on his word. He also said that in view of Pandit Nehru's national and international responsibilities, it was his greatest duty to help him carry out those responsibilities and strengthen his hands. Pantji added that whatever he did for that purpose would be insignificant.

On December 23, 1954, the Governor of Uttar Pradesh hosted a farewell lunch for Pantji. It was a farewell to a leader who, from 1937 onwards, had been in the forefront in the Provincial Legislature

and parliamentary forums and lent strength and power and glory to the Congress. On December 27, Pantji was given a formal farewell at a special session of the Uttar Pradesh Legislature, and on December 28, a new Congress Government was formed in Uttar Pradesh under the leadership of Dr. Sampurnanand. As a matter of fact, Dr. Sampurnanand had been elected the Chief Minister only at Pantji's suggestion. On December 31, Pantji was given a grand farewell from Lucknow in a emotionally charged atmosphere. Even though Pantji was going only to Delhi which was quite close to Uttar Pradesh, it seemed he was leaving Uttar Pradesh for good and going to a far off place.

Pantji greeted the New Year of 1955 in Delhi. He stayed at Pandit Nehru's residence for a few days. Later, he had his permanent residence at 6, King Edward Road (now the Vice-Presidents residence on Maulana Azad Road) where from January 7, he lived with his family. On January 10, Pantji was made the Home Minister. After Sardar Patel, he was the next person in whom people had faith and felt that he was capable of handling with a smile the most difficult situation in interest of the nation.

Pantji was all in all in Uttar Pradesh. He had created and directed the administrative machinery of the Province. But the administration at the Centre was a different matter altogether. Pantji was so absorbed in his work in Uttar Pradesh that even though he was conscious of work to be done at the national level, he had not thought about the administrative measures to be taken. In Delhi, he had to adopt a new way of functioning.

The state of the nation was not normal at that time. On the one hand, there were ideological differences within the Congress. Pandit Nehru wanted to shape the Congress according to his ideas. Apparently, there was no opposition to it. But there was no dearth in the Congress of the people of moderate and rightist ideologies. Those people accepted Pandit Nehru's policies on the Congress platform, but when it came to implementation, they did not give them a concrete shape. They did not have the moral courage to stand

before him and oppose his views. But inwardly, they were flaccid about following those policies in practice and even created obstructions in the pace of progress. On the other side, the situation within the country was becoming unusually disturbed. It seemed that the country was on the point of breaking. At some places, it was the language question that raised its head and at other places regional conflicts were growing. In the NEFA region in north-east, Phizo was aggressively advocating secessionist trends.

Pantji constantly studied and pondered over all national problems very seriously and prepared himself to face the situation and solve it. The special feature of his administration was that whatever the subject in which he was preparing to take an active measure, he studied the question in great detail and considered it in every aspect and then thought about a practical solution. But in the process, he did not compromise on principles. Very soon, he acquired a firm grip on national issues and his suggestions were considered specially important in the Cabinet. In April, Pantji was nominated in the Rajya Sabha. Later, after Maulana Azad's death, he came to the Lok Sabha and was made the Deputy Leader. By that time, the language riots had started in Assam. The original inhabitants of Assam had a deep-rooted feeling that the Bengalis were opposed to the language and culture of Assam. A large number of Bengalis had to leave the Gwalpada district of Assam and migrate to West Bengal, because the Assamese people had a violent hatred for Bengalis in their hearts.

During Pantji's tenure, the country was facing the serious problem of reorganization of States. Pantji solved that problem in the light of the principle adopted by the Congress. In the meantime, there were riots in Bombay. It was during this time that the problem of Maharashtra and Gujarat was solved by the creation of Maharashtra and Gujarat States. During his time, the Communist Government came to power in Kerala and after the mid-term election, the Congress came back to power in that state. Pantji had realized the seriousness of the Punjab problem right in those days. He desired an amicable solution to the Hindu-Sikh problem. In 1955, Master Tara

Singh raised a demand for a separate Punjabi Suba meant exclusively for the Punjabis. That agitation was in full swing. Communalism had given a very serious turn to the situation. Pantji was firmly convinced that it was a communal agitation.

The problem of Assam was becoming grave because of anti-national activities in that region. There were language riots in Assam even in 1960. Pantji was unhappy over those incidents. At the same time, Pakistan had been constantly creating one problem or the other on the issue of Kashmir. But Pantji settled that problem also. The problem of China was also creating a grave situation, because China had started making fresh claims on Indian territory. Around the same time, on July 15, 1957, employees of the Central Government went on strike. Pantji made successful efforts to see that the national life was not paralyzed. The question of the official language at the Centre falls within the jurisdiction of the Home Minister. Pantji did considerable work in that field. The Department of Harijan Welfare used to be under the Home Ministry in those days. His contribution in that field too was historically very important. On January 26, 1957, Pantji was honoured with the title of Bharat Ratna for his invaluable services.

Now Pantji had reached the age of 73 years. His had been a life dedicated to the service of the nation. He had been harassed by several illness. But not bothered by ill health, he engaged himself ceaselessly and devotedly in the work of national interest. He passed away on March 7, 1961 at 8.50 in the morning. Pantji's life was a life of achievements. In the history of modern India, his was a life of a man devoted to the *mantra* of service. At the same time, it was the life of a builder who would be always remembered by the nation.

PANTJI'S CONTRIBUTION TO INDEPENDENT INDIA

PAKISTAN WAS BORN out of dark communal passions. Pakistan indeed came into being, but the process of partition created for the whole country countless problems. The partition of the country which seemed natural in principle from the point of view of freedom of India, turned out to be extremely tortuous in practice. The Hindus and the Sikhs came to India from Pakistan in very large numbers as refugees after they were scorched in the flames of communalism and had lost all their possessions. They had been subjected to such brutal treatment in Pakistan that they could not have continued to live in Pakistan with self-respect. What happened in Pakistan had its repercussions in India too and there were communal riots at many places. The atmosphere of communalism created in the country at that time would always be considered a dark chapter in the history of mankind. The acts of terrorism in Pakistan gave rise to the fire of retaliation in India. The Government's responsibility in that situation was very great. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was the Premier of the United Provinces at that time. Even though communalism raged wild in the United Provinces also, it was contained because of Pantji's deft handling.

Rehabilitation of Refugees

Pantji took special steps to establish peace in the Province. He spread the message of communal peace, goodwill and brotherhood

and took stern measures against the anarchist forces in the Province. On the one hand, the problem of refugees was becoming extremely grave and on the other hand, as retaliation there were terrible riots at Dehra Dun, Meerut, Garh Mukteshwar etc., in the Western United Provinces. Pantji personally visited all those places and got peace established. On the other side, East Pakistan too showed its communalist nature in 1950 and the Hindus were driven out from there. As a reaction, riots broke out at Muradabad, Pilibhit, Shahjehanpur, Hardoi, Khiri, Basti, Banaras etc. The Government made successful attempts to bring the disturbed situation under control. In the end, there was an agreement between India and Pakistan in New Delhi in 1950.

The agreement was no doubt signed, but the communal bodies like Jamaat-e-Islam were fanning communal passions on the one hand and the organisations like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Hindu Mahsabha and Rama Rajya Parishad were provoking the Hindus. By 1952, Pantji solved this problem with the implicit co-operation of his colleagues and communalism was altogether wiped out in the United Provinces. Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, Dr. Sampurnanand etc. stood devotedly by Pantji's side. In an atmosphere of destruction, peace is the first requirement to build anew. Pantji successfully proved that and it is not to be forgotten.

The Muslim leaders of the United Provinces had contributed the most to the formation of Pakistan and the roots of the Muslim League had gone very deep there. In the midst of this raging passion of communalism was the overwhelming problem of rehabilitating these refugees. Pantji not only expressed his verbal sympathy for them, but took prompt measures to rehabilitate them and made his contribution to the solution of that problem in a manner befitting his dignity.

Refugee camps were set up all over the United Provinces and temporary arrangements were made for their stay. Arrangements were also made for providing food, water, medical treatment for the

refugees as well as education for their children. Employment-oriented schemes for women and displaced persons were also implemented. Training and production centres were opened for them.

Pantji applied a broadbased scheme in the foothill region of Nainital in order to settle the displaced people. He made such arrangements there that now that region is recognised as a prosperous agricultural and a leading industrial area of the country. Apart from that, arrangements were also made to settle such people at Chunar, Roorki, Modi Nagar, Saharanpur etc. and efforts were also made to build separate colonies for them and provide them employment. An industrial area was built up to settle them at Naini. Arrangements were made to provide living quarters to 10,000 refugees at one place in Hastinapur. That work continued uninterrupted for six years. By the time Pantji went to Delhi, the refugees who had come to the United Provinces from Pakistan were fully settled. Under Pantji's leadership, loans worth several crores of rupees were given to the displaced persons for nearly 30,000 shops, more than 10,000 houses and working capital to be invested in business. The refugees who had come to Banaras from East Pakistan were settled around Chunar and the necessary arrangements were also made for their stay etc.

Thus, by his administrative efficiency, Pantji gave place and respect to the refugees at the time of a national calamity. He provided them relief in their suffering and affliction. Thus, he gave a lease of life to millions of people and put them on path to progress. In the midst of destruction and dejection, he was a builder with a judicious practical sense and it was a proof of his diligent way of functioning.

Abolition of Zamindari System

Another great thing Pantji did as the Chief Minister of the Uttar Pradesh was the abolition of the zamindari system. For centuries, the

peasant has been a slave of the zamindar in Uttar Pradesh. It was by exploitation and oppression of the peasants that the zamindars lived with prosperity and affluence. They collaborated with the British for the perpetuation of India's slavery. There were some good people among them too, but they were very few. Without the abolition of the zamindari system, it was impossible to think about improving the lot of the poor peasants. Nor was it possible to bring about an agricultural revolution in the Province. Agriculture is the most important activity in Uttar Pradesh, but because of the exploitation by the zamindars and their selfish interests, it had badly suffered. Right from the beginning, the Congress had believed that as soon as it came to power in Uttar Pradesh, it would be required to abolish the zamindari system for the economic development of Uttar Pradesh and to give an upward thrust to the backward economic system of the Province.

In 1946, a Committee was set up for getting suggestions regarding the abolition of the zamindari system. Giving the guidelines to the committee Pantji said: "This committee has not been set up with the intention of harming special interests of any particular class, community or individual. We believe in deciding this issue in public interest after pondering over it dispassionately." His consideration of the problem was psychological and social as much as it was economic. The Muslim League members of the Provincial Legislature were on the side of the zamindars. They boycotted the committee.

This committee in its recommendations described the zamindari system as an obstacle to agricultural development. At the same time, they also revealed many secrets. In the opinion of the Committee, land reform was not possible without the abolition of the zamindari system. It had come to that conclusion after careful thought.

Pantji had before him the problem of economic freedom of almost 50 million peasants who were suffering at the hands of the zamindars. The statistics presented in that connection were by

themselves enough to convey the facts. Even among the zamindars, big zamindars were very few. Among the zamindar class, more than 90 per cent were those who paid less than Rs. 25 by way of land revenue. About 32 per cent of the remaining zamindars paid around Rs. 250 as land revenue. They numbered about 30,000. About 5,000 zamindars paid the revenue of Rs. 500 and only 400 zamindars paid more than Rs. 1,000 as land revenue. The number of those who paid more than Rs. 10,000 as land revenue was very insignificant. Thus, there were great inequalities among small and big zamindars.

Fast economic changes were taking place in the world as well as in the countries in India's neighbourhood. Looking at those changes too, abolition of the zamindari system was the need of the hour. The rulers of the Princely States had already bent their knees before Sardar Patel and those states had become an integral part of India. But zamindars were against this measure. They created hurdles in the abolition of zamindari system with the help of the Muslim League. They not only opposed it in the Legislature but formed an organisation to arouse opposition even among the common people. Ultimately, soon after the legislation was passed, those people obtained a stay order from the High Court to stall the implementation of that legislation.

Even when the Bill was presented in the Provincial Legislature, the Muslim League members who represented those zamindars, started obstructing the passage of the Bill by proposing a large number of amendments. On the other hand, the Socialist Party declared that the Bill was reactionary and was in favour of the zamindars. Pantji's task in this regard was very difficult, but he was ready to put the deal firmly with all obstructionist tactics. Pantji considered his stands in the minutest details, and when he chose any path after due consideration, there was no question of retracing his steps.

The problem of abolition of the zamindari system was discussed in the Legislative Assembly of Uttar Pradesh for one whole year.

Several amendments were introduced in the Bill in the Legislative Council as well. Hence, as per rule, the Bill had to be reintroduced in the Legislative Assembly for reconsideration. Obstructions were created again in the Legislative Assembly. But ultimately, the Bill did get passed. However, in protest against this, hundreds of petitions were received from the zamindars by the High Court.

Pantji wanted to complete that work as quickly as possible in public interest. He was disturbed by the fact that the legislation was being obstructed despite its conformity with law. He knew that the more the delay in its implementation, the more the Congress, the people and the Province as a whole stood to lose. The hearing of the case started in the High Court on March 12, 1952. The Bill for abolition of the zamindari system was declared valid by the High Court on May 1, 1952 and it was implemented on July 1, 1952.

This legislation to abolish that system of exploitation which had continued for several centuries was like a boon. However, the problem could not be solved merely by passing a legislation. Its successful implementation was no less important. From the time that the Bill was under consideration, the zamindars were playing all sorts of tricks so that after the system was abolished, the major portion of land holding would come to them, and they could live in prosperity. They started giving land to people on lease on a very large scale. On May 21, 1952, Pantji declared those title deeds illegal. In 1930, under Pandit Jawaharlal's leadership, the Provincial Congress Committee of Uttar Pradesh had committed itself to abolition of the zamindari system. Pantji was the chairman of the committee appointed by the Congress to look after the peasants' interests. It was the resolve not only on the part of Pandit Nehru but also of Pantji and the moment he came to power, he translated that resolve into practice. It was only because of this that a way was opened for land reforms and agricultural revolution. Pantji's courage and persistence in this matter were widely appreciated.

Beginning of Panchayati Raj

Pantji's another act in public interest during his tenure as the Chief Minister was the establishment of Panchayati Raj in Uttar Pradesh. The Congress believed that effective measures should be taken in the direction of establishing self-rule in the villages by making village Assemblies and village Panchayats the units of power and thereby march towards community development. He gave concrete shape to that dream also in 1953. This scheme was a boon from the point of view of bringing about social and economic changes in the villages. It gave to the masses an opportunity to participate in the administration. Thus was born the power of the people which is the ultimate legislating authority to create the situation which would lead to public welfare and progress.

Contribution at National Level

After going to Delhi, Pantji acquainted himself with the national problems and was prepared to work for their solutions. When Pantji came to Delhi, the Congress, under the leadership of Pandit Nehru, was determined to march forward in every field. Now Pandit Nehru was not only the supreme leader of the Congress, he also showed the way of thinking afresh about the problems and tasks before the country. Pandit Nehru was Gandhiji's successor, but his own line of thinking was different from Gandhiji. Even before Independence, Pandit Nehru had been a supporter of socialism. As such, the Congress leaned more towards the rightist ideology. Between 1947 and 1955, he tried to see that socialism was established in the country; but his idea was not materializing in the presence of the Gandhian peasant leader like Sardar Patel, and so long as he was there, socialism had no place in the Congress ideology.

In the Congress session of April 1948, it was declared as a Congress objective to establish a co-operative system in India by peaceful means, in which everyone would get equal right to make progress. It was stated that such a system would be established

through the medium of political, economic and social equality. India would be a supporter of world peace. After Sardar Patels' demise and resignation of Babu Purushottam Das Tandon as the Congress President, the way was opened for bringing socialism in the country, so that Pandit Nehru could launch his campaign to shape the Congress after his ideas.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the President of the Congress from 1951 to 1955. He wielded complete power in the Congress. It was only at his behest that Shri U.N. Dhebar was elected the Congress President after him. He made a beginning by proposing the ideas of planning and community development at the Jaipur session of the Congress to give a concrete shape to his socialist ideology. Through the five-year programmes of the Five Year Plans, he started giving a definite shape to his resolve regarding the economic future of India. He prepared himself to establish big industries in Public Sector in order to make India economically self-reliant. The Planning Commission was meant for establishing big industries from the scientific point of views and the Community Development schemes were for the rural development. It had a place in it for Gandhian ideology with regard to social reconstruction. In principle, Pandit Nehru started his efforts for widespread changes in 1955 at the Avadi session of the Congress. A resolution for taking the Congress in the direction of socialism was passed at that session of the Congress, and the proposal for a socialistic pattern for building up the country was accepted. At the same time, accepting that social control and government authority were necessary for the increasing production and equal distribution of natural wealth was also discussed during that session. Two years later, at the Indore session of the Congress in 1957, the term socialism was accepted in the place of socialistic pattern. At the 1959 Congress session at Nagpur which was presided over by Smt. Indira Gandhi, a categorical declaration was made regarding the national industrial and agricultural policies. This included collective and co-operative farming, peasant's right to ownership of land and getting their due share from the produce of the land. At the same time, a resolution about building up the network of co-operative services within three years was also passed.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru did not consider himself a mere politician. He believed he had to work a lot for India. He wanted to change the face of India within a few years during his life time and build a new India. The next Congress session was held at Bhubaneswar. That session was a new starting point in the history of the Congress. The discussion about socialism came to an end there. The Congress declared socialism as its objective during that session. In the Bhubaneswar declaration of the Congress, the following points emerged clearly: The aim of the Indian National Congress is to work for the benefit of the masses and make progress by peaceful and constitutional means; the country has to be taken along the path of socialism, parliamentary democracy and progress based on economic, political and social rights; universal peace has to be established in the world through amity and friendship. In other words, establishing a socialistic state through parliamentary democracy, making continuous efforts for peace and friendship in the world were set as ideals for the Congress. Indian socialism was a new type of socialism. It was different from the principles of Marxism and believed in the Gandhian principles that purity of means should be considered essential for the attainment of an ideal. Even Morarji Desai, who held the rightist views, believed that the Sarvodaya Society as conceived by Mahatma Gandhi was the first big step in the direction of socialism. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's conception of socialism included democracy, dignity of the individual and moral values. As the Home Minister, Pantji had to work bearing in mind all those problems and remain alert about this ideology of Pandit Nehru at the same time. He did exactly that. Because of Pantji, he could establish his ideological authority.

Formation of Linguistic States

The Congress had resolved to form Linguistic States when it came to power. The British had formed the Provinces to suit their selfish interests and had organised each Province in such a way that its inhabitants should not establish cultural and linguistic unity among themselves. The policy of Divide and Rule was the basic

policy of the British rule in India. For the organisation of Linguistic Provinces, it was essential to be judicious both in speech and action. It was indeed a difficult problem to see that regional sentiments did not obstruct national sentiments and the people speaking the language of the minorities lived with dignity and without fear amongst the people who spoke the language of the majority community. This was necessary because it was not the matter only of discretion but also of sentiment and creativity. It was directly related to the feelings of the people. Even the British had felt the need for reorganising the Provinces only after the first World War. The Mountford Report even contained recommendations in this regard. In this connection, the Congress had set up the Dhar Commission in which the background regarding the Southern States like Karnataka, Kerala etc. was given.

The Parliament started discussing the Fazl Ali Report on December 14, 1953. He urged Parliament that in view of the national and international situation, it should accept the recommendations of the commission so that the implementation could be expedited according to the wishes of Parliament. Interviewing the proceedings, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru made a statement that the Government was not bound to accept the recommendations of the Commission. In his own way, Pantji felt that Pandit Nehru had unduly minimized the importance of the Commission. Pantji also made it clear that the reorganisation of the States was being contemplated because it was felt that it would make the country stronger and the people would feel satisfied. He said that all people should get together and contribute towards the reconstruction of the country. Dr. Lanka Sundaram and Madhava Reddy moved amendments to the resolution. The Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Mavlankar stated that nearly 100 members had expressed their desire to speak on the subject. Acharya Kripalani started the debate. The debate continued till December 23 and 124 members took part in the discussion.

Pantji analyzed the differences among the Provinces over the recommendations of the Commission and stated categorically that he

was in favour of having big states. Pantji was familiar with the advantages of big states. While discharging his other responsibilities, Pantji strained himself so much by working devotedly for settling this issue that his health deteriorated. Pandit Nehru informed the Rajya Sabha about it. At the same time, more demonstrations had started at many places in protest against the recommendations of the Commission. The demonstrations had taken a violent turn in Punjab and Bombay. There were terrible riots on November 18 in Bombay over this issue. There were also some incidents of firing during those riots.

The Government was worried and it was in a dilemma because of the disturbed conditions in the country. The Bill presented in Parliament on April 18, 1956 is known as the States Reorganisation Bill. It had been drafted on the basis of the recommendations of the Fazl Ali Commission and was passed on to the Select Committee. The report of the Select Committee was received on July 16, 1956 and with that, Parliament began reconsidering the Bill. The problem involved the sentiments to such an extent that C.D. Deshmukh resigned as the Union Finance Minister in protest against it.

That Bill had a provision to make Bombay a Union Territory and have Maharashtra and Gujarat as two autonomous States with a common Governor, High Court and Public Service Commission. However, no party was happy with that provision. In view of that dissatisfaction and agitation, some members proposed an amendment that Bombay, Maharashtra, Marathwada, Vidharbha, Gujarat, Kutch and Saurashtra should be combined to form one State. The Maharashtra Congress Committee recommended the formation of a new bilingual state by joining Bombay and Vidharbha. The problem got more complicated in the emotional tangles.

The problem of Bombay seemed to defy solution. In that connection there was a massive demonstration on December 18, 1958, in front of Parliament House. That demonstration was in support of the demand for United Maharashtra in which 100 members of the Provincial Legislature, the Chairman of the

Municipal Corporations as well as the Mayors of Bombay and Poona took part. Pantji was not the type to be cowed down by such demonstration.

In view of that demonstration, agitations started in Gujarat as well, and on August 8, the Maha Gujarat Janata Parishad created a strange situation. It decided to have a memorial in front of the Ahmedabad Congress office in memory of those who died in firing at Ahmedabad, Kalol and Nadiad while raising a demand for Maha Gujarat. The construction of the memorial being in the middle of a public road caused traffic obstructions. Hence, the police dismantled the memorial from that site. Now the agitation for Maha Gujarat as a State separate from Maharashtra which had started on August 8, gradually turned violent and spread all over Gujarat. On December 1958, the Opposition Parties moved a resolution for staying the action.

After that Pantji toured the Bombay State to personally study the situation, and clearly explain the policy of the Government. A convention of the Western region was held at Bombay on December 18, over which Pantji presided. During that convention, an assurance was given to the linguistic minorities that they would be given greater protection and also adequate educational facilities. At a public meeting at Bombay, Pantji declared that the Government would try to form the bilingual Bombay State. He urged the people to dissociate themselves from agitations over small issues in the interest of the nation. At a meeting on the Prabhadevi grounds in Bombay, he again denounced the use of violent methods. Pantji tried to create a public opinion in favour of the decision of the Government. However, he saw that the situation was not particularly in his favour. But he felt that the public both in Gujarat and Maharashtra was in favour of the division. At the same time, the Congress also took cognizance of the public sentiment, and passed a resolution to the effect that the Bombay State should be divided on linguistic basis. On February 24, 1960, the announcement was made with full preparations about the division of the Bombay State. Ultimately, on May 1, 1960, the Bombay State was divided into the States of Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Bombay continued to be the capital of Maharashtra and Ahmedabad became the capital of Gujarat. Later, the new capital was developed at Gandhinagar at a little distance from Ahmedabad. Shri Yashwantrao Chavan was elected the Chief Minister of Maharashtra and Dr. Jivraj Mehta the Chief Minister of Gujarat. It was due to Pantji's efficiency that he could give concrete shape to such a big resolve like the formation of linguistic states. As a builder of the nation, this was not an ordinary but an extraordinary task.

The Punjab Problem

The problem of Punjab was becoming grave even in those days. Pantji believed that Punjab was a border State. The problem there was not merely linguistic. There were sentiments and political ambitions underlying that problem. For centuries, the Hindus and the Sikhs had been living together in Punjab. The friendship and love between the two communities was essential for the development of Punjab and also of India. The Sikh leader Master Tara Singh started the agitation by raising the demand for a separate Sikh State. Religious places (gurudwaras) started being used for political purposes. Nearly 8,000 Akalis were arrested in the agitation for Khalistan. The agitation continued uninterrupted for two months and then it petered out. But the agitation started again in full swing in March 1956.

Seeds of dissensions between those two major communities were sown. Those two communities had lived so far in an atmosphere of love. Now the new demand was being made out of greed for attaining political power. But Pantji stood firm on his ground. As a solution, Pantji suggested that Punjab should not be divided and a regional council should be formed instead for fulfilling the legitimate demands, whether political or economic, of both the communities. Through this suggestion, it was provided that two councils should be formed for the Hindi and the Punjabi regions. There were 14 subjects under the jurisdiction of those regional councils which were empowered to give recommendations to the

State Government concerning the legislative measures. Seth Ram Nath was the Chairman of the Council for the Punjabi region and Shri Balwant Rai Tayal of the Hindi region. On December 5, 1959, Master Tara Singh declared at the 12th Akali Dal convention that an agitation would be launched if the demand for the Punjabi Suba was not granted. He repeated the threat of agitation on February 14, 1960 at the Committee meeting of the Siromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. Pantji responded to the threat in Master Tara Singh's own words. Master Tara Singh had been making frantic preparations for the agitation. On May 5, 1960, he declared that there would be a mass demonstration at Delhi to press the demand for the Punjabi Suba. Pantji made it clear that the Government would not submit to threats of morchas and that Master Tara Singh's demand would not be granted. At the same time, he appealed to all sections of society to co-operate in the efforts to bring about national unity. He also pointed out that there was danger on our borders and in such a situation, no step should be taken which may harm the interests of the nation. Master Tara Singh continued with his threats of starting the agitation and when he went to the extreme, he was ultimately arrested on May 24, 1961.

Pantji's forthrightness with regard to Punjab is very important in the context of the present situation. He was convinced that if a border State got involved in communal agitations, there would be growing tensions among the people living in that State. And if Punjab were to be divided, both the Hindus and the Sikhs would shed their blood, which would harm the interests of the nation. Pantji was aware that the situation in the border States was distinctly different. As the Home Minister, he was always the supporter of national interests and he did not believe in making any compromise on that point.

The Assam Problem

On the North-Eastern border too, Assam was becoming a problem State. In those days, the border of Assam touched Pakistan,

Burma and China. In 1950, the Hindus were being driven out from East Bengal and they had come to India in very large numbers. Their numbers swelled so much that the economic situations of Assam was becoming very unstable. The Assamese speaking people started agitating against the Bengalis and started ill-treating them. Murder and plunder became the order of the day. The agitating crowds started resorting to violence everywhere, and on July 19, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had to go there personally to study the situation. Pantji believed that it was shameful that there should be such disturbances after the partition of the country. He encouraged those Bengalis who had come to India in panic to go back to Assam. But the situation in Assam was not coming under control. With a view to prevent such troubles, Parliament appointed a committee to make a judicial inquiry and give the necessary suggestions in the matter. Provincialism, and the contemptible linguistic concepts, gave a terrible mental shock to Pantji, because he had always been a staunch supporter of nationalism.

The Naga Problem

With India's Independence, the Nagas had been demanding a separate state for themselves. They had been provoked to do so by the Christian Missionary propaganda. The Nagas were becoming increasingly anti-India, to the extent that they had even started taking foreign help and thereby causing an affront to India. They mobilized sufficient force by 1955 and under Phizo's leadership, they started indulging in terrible acts of violence. Phizo and his followers were engaged in acts like killing innocent citizens, brutally attacking Government officials and similar destructive activities.

Pantji took a very strong attitude with regard to the Naga problem; but the trouble still continued in that region. In August 1957, there was a convention of the Naga tribes within the Union of India. A delegation of their representative met Pandit Nehru. Ultimately, in December 1957, their demand was granted and a new state of Naga Hills Twanghian came into being, which is popularly known as Nagaland.

The Kashmir Problem

There had been continuous trouble in Kashmir. The administration and the maintenance of peace and security in Kashmir were under the Home Ministry, and the policy decisions were under the Ministry of External Affairs. As soon as Pantji became the Home Minister, he started taking interest in Kashmir, he said in 1955 that the situation in Kashmir had changed a great deal in the course of the past eight years. Kashmir had been making systematic efforts for progress. Pakistan had established a military alliance with the United States. At the same time, the Legislative Assembly of the State formed on the basis of adult franchise, had decided to remain with the Union of India, and hence, there was no question at all of holding.

Pantji regarded Kashmir as an integral part of India. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru also supported that view in May 1957, at the Northern Regional Conference. With a view to solve the Kashmir issue, Pantji applied 31 central legislations to Kashmir. The Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir had accepted the Indian Constitution. By January 26, 1957, Pantji applied the major portion of the Indian Constitution to Kashmir. So long as Pantji was alive, he took a very serious view of the Kashmir problem and made efforts for its development as a State belonging to India.

The Pakistan Problem

Pakistan had been creating trouble even after its birth as an independent country. Political leaders of Pakistan knew Pantji very well. Pantji also knew them particularly well. He had already dealt with them in Uttar Pradesh. Pakistan had been always trying to create ill-will and fomenting trouble through malicious propaganda in India. It also provoked lawlessness in border regions through its infiltrators. Pakistan's Prime Minister Shri Mohamed Ali came to India for direct talks. No serious discussion could be held with

him because of growing instability in Pakistan at that time. In October 1957, Iskandar Mirza became the President of Pakistan, and on that account, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Suhrawardy had to resign. When Iskandar Mirza took the office of the President, Chundrigar became the Prime Minister and Sir Feroze Khan Noon, the Foreign Minister of Pakistan.

Sir Feroze Khan Noon came to Delhi in September, 1958 and had talks with Pantji, the Indian Home Minister. Those talks did not succeed because of Pakistan's hatred for India and the relations between Pakistan and India deteriorated. On the Eastern front, the Pakistani armies captured Lakhimpur in Assam. There was firing from both sides and the Pakistani soldiers were cleared out from Kachhar. The Pakistani armies continued to indulge in acts of provocation in India and conspired to malign India in the world.

Pantji realized during the meeting of the Eastern Regional Committee, that the migration of people from outside was adversely affecting and thereby weakening the economic conditions of Assam. An agreement was signed between Sir Feroze Khan Noon and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for solving the border issues relating to both the countries. It was decided through this agreement that a part of Berubadi in West Bengal would be handed over to Pakistan. However, that transfer was stayed by the Supreme Court in response to a public demand against it. On April 10, 1959, the Pakistanis shot down an Indian Air Force plane. On July 14, nearly two hundred Pakistani infiltrators entered Cooch Behar. They resorted to loot and arson there, attacked people and wounded them and went back carrying with them animals and wealth. The Pakistani Air Force planes started violating the Indian border. Pantji reinforced the Border Security Force. Pakistan was not only infiltrating at the Indian border, it was also preparing for a military attack on India. It was determined to disturb law and order in India by creating dissensions through communal propaganda. As far as law and order situation was concerned, it was Pantji's direct responsibility. He strengthened the Border Police and Security Department and ordered them to protect the rights of the citizens in those areas. At

the same time, he also sealed the borders of Assam and West Bengal where they touched Pakistan. With a view to solve the problem, a new arrangement was made for the coordination between civil and military officials.

Dealing with China

While Pakistan was busy with its own (military) pursuits, China, which was once friendly towards India, also started cherishing extra-territorial ambitions. It had started indulging in anti-India activities. Right from 1952, it had been sending its soldiers to explore the situation in border areas and setting up military camps near the Indian border. It had build a road in Ladakh which stretched from Sinkiang to Tibet. It started infiltrating and resorting to acts of infringement in the Barhahoti and Dam Chowk areas of Uttar Pradesh. China went on creating trouble to such an extent that in 1957, the Chinese commandos entered the Lohit area in India. They even imprisoned some Indians in Aksai Chin in 1958. These intrusions on the part of China led to angry reactions in India and when China captured Langju on August 25, 1959, the question of defending North-Eastern border became a matter of grave concern for the Indian Government. China's ambitions were growing day by day. By September 1959, China had even started pressing its claims on large areas inside India.

India had been supporting China on all fronts all along. It had maintained brotherly relations with that country which spoilt those relations by conquering Tibet. The Dalai Lama had to take refuge in India to save his life. Thousands of Tibetans fled from their country and found refuge in the land of the Buddha on humanitarian grounds, as the neighbours of this country, and the Government of India gave them as much help and protection as possible. The Chinese Prime Minister Chou-en-lai came to India at the invitation of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Pressing the claim over the area of 40,000 square miles, he presented a map of China in which Assam, NEFA, Bhutan Sikkim, Ladakh and several areas of Kashmir were shown as part of China.

In 1959, five Indian businessmen were taken prisoners in Lhasa. The Indians living there fled to India. Delegations of both the countries continued to meet for peace talks and discussions over the border issue, but it merely resulted in the increasingly stubborn attitude of China. On November 9, 1959 Pantji warned China regarding its expansionist attitude. He made a serious study of the border problem and considered it in all its aspects. When Chou-en-lai came to India, Pantji discussed those matters with him. He repudiated the Chinese claims by his arguments which he substantiated with facts. Chou-en-lai realized Pantji's impressive qualities, his firm determination and his statesmanship. He had to accept that Pantji was a man of firm resolve and it was difficult to measure the depth of his mind. Pantji prepared himself for every eventuality and tried his utmost to do whatever he had resolved to do.

T.T. Krishnamachari

During Pantji's tenure as the Home Minister, T.T. Krishnamachari affair also came to light. Shri Krishnamachari was the Union Finance Minister and he was accused of having given undue benefits to Mudhra. Pantji had considered Shri Krishnamachari as an able, brilliant and adept person. He admired him as the Finance Minister too. Although Shri Krishnamachari had to resign his ministership because of those allegations, Pantji still praised him on the floor of the House and outside and did not change his personal opinion about him. When he liked someone, he openly respected him, no matter what happened and was not bothered if anyone condemned him for that.

Central Government Employees Strike

While Pantji was the Finance Minister, the Central Government employees struck work from midnight on July 11, 1960. The employees said that the wages they had been getting were not enough to make their ends meet. At the same time, the Government

had not fully accepted the recommendations of the Second Wage Board. The employees demanded that 1948 should be taken as the base year and the wages should be linked with the price index. In support of these demands, nearly 15 lakhs Government employees joined the strike. About 20,000 Government employees had been leading the strike, throwing to the winds all considerations of discipline. Pantji seriously pondered over the demands of the strikers and tried his utmost to bring about a compromise.

The employees were adamant about their demands. Now the Government faced a very difficult situation. It was the obligation of the administration to see that the general public was not put to any inconvenience because of the strike, and the law and order machinery did not break down. It was not an ordinary strike. It spread in all sectors concerned with State transport and means of communications. Pantji resolved to deal with the strike. Many members of the Union Cabinet developed cold feet by that widespread strike and wanted to come to a settlement. They even made some efforts from their side. Pandit Nehru was also worried. But Pantji was firm in his resolve. He was not at all ready for a compromise. He went to the extent of rejecting the compromise formula presented by Feroze Gandhi and did not even agree to hold talks with the strikers. He believed that once we succumbed to pressure and accepted a compromise, people would always try to bully the Government in one way or the other. The fact that the strike did not last for more than four days was the proof of his administrative efficiency. When the strike broke down, he did not have any feeling of vindictiveness. Like a guardian, he reinstated the workers and re-employed all the employees whose services had been terminated. The employees came to realize his strength and the awe of his firmness led to discipline in administration.

Hindi as Official Language

Pantji was an Indian not only in the manner of his dress, but also his way of thinking. He not only admired the Indian way of

dress, he also brought the Indian way of life and behaviour in his own case. He was the Chairman of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha of Kashi, and through the Sabha, he infused a new power in Hindi as a language, prepared a scheme for the publication of Encyclopedias, dictionaries and history of Hindi literature. He continued to actively help the Sabha till he lived. He even went to Banaras to attend the executive meeting of the Sabha and also held the meetings at his own residence at Delhi.

The use of Hindi as the official language for the purpose of administration was the subject that came under the Home Ministry. The Constitution of India had provided that Hindi would become the official language of India by 1965. There was also a provision in the Constitution to form a Commission to get suggestions in this matter. Under that provision, Pantji announced the setting up of the official Languages Commission on May 2, 1956, with Shri Bal Govind Kher as its Chairman. It was the function of that Commission to submit recommendations to the President of India on the following points:

- (1) How would Hindi be increasingly used in official work?
- (2) Which language could be used by the Government for its official work?
- (3) What figures should be used for a particular work of the Government or for all its work?
- (4) Deciding a programme for replacing English with Hindi.

That Commission had 20 members and all of them had been taken on the Commission as the representatives of different Indian languages. The term for the Commission was one year. Pantji particularly looked into the functioning of that Commission which submitted its recommendations in August, 1957, to the President of

India. Among the main recommendations of the Commission was the suggestion that Hindi should be made an additional medium for the examinations of the Union Public Service Commission and Indian Universities.

This Commission also recommended the formation of a national academy for the development of Indian languages. It also recommended that till such time that Hindi became the official language at the Centre, the use of English should be continued. The Commission recommended that Hindi should be gradually introduced and finally be made the official language. A 20 member Parliamentary Committee was found under the Chairmanship of Pantji to consider the recommendations of the Official Languages Commission. Those 20 members held very divergent views. Some of them were staunch supporters of Hindi and they opposed English in principle, while others were opposed to the use of Hindi. Some of them were opposed to it as a matter of principle and other were opposed particularly to the recommendations of the Commission. Whenever the Parliamentary Committee met, the solution of the problem tended to get entangled in discussions. As the Chairman of that Commission, Pantji showed great forbearance and dignity and chose to take the decision through consensus.

Before coming to Centre, he as Chief Minister of U.P. had established Hindi as an official language of the State. The entire Hindi-speaking population of our country had faith in him, and in that context, his responsibility was very great. Even though he was caught in discussions and arguments, he never turned away from his ideals. He knew how complex the language problem was and how it was related to popular sentiments. He himself had said: "This is a very difficult situation, and actually, a large number of people are of the view that there would be very little scope for arriving at some compromise. If we allow ourselves to be entangled in linguistic controversies etc., we would lose sight of India's language that represented the vested interests of a particular section of society. It was, in a way, the language of basic importance in the country. Pantji's love for Hindi had to take into

account the opposition from those sections. Pandit Nehru also had to interfere in the matter. As the Prime Minister, he reassured the non-Hindi speaking people, with the result that some members of the Committee even went to the extent of saying that there were differences between the Prime Minister and the Home Minister on the issue of the official language. Pantji had always respected Pandit Nehru and this time he very generously accepted many of his points. But he was firmly convinced that the official language could be only Hindi and in all faith he tried, within the limits of the Constitution, to propagate the use of Hindi in his field of official functioning.

Lover of the Harijans and the Downtrodden

Pantji always looked upon the Harijans and the downtrodden with generosity and he was interested in their uplift. After the attainment of Independence, special provisions were made in the Constitution for the Scheduled Castes. Pantji worked creditably for the protective legislation. Personally, he was against untouchability.

He introduced in the Lok Sabha on April 27, 1957, a Bill for the eradication of untouchability. He made constant efforts for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In the Five Year Plans, he provided four crore rupees for that purpose. This amount was a substantial increase over the earlier provision. He set up a special department in his ministry for these sections of society whose function was to keep a watch over their appointments and implementations of the measures to ensure their rights. He started asking for statistics about appointments etc., from all departments. He decided the quota of their reservation in appointments and made it a permanent feature. At the same time, he also arranged for the extension of that provision if it had not been fully carried out within the specified period. He relaxed the rules regarding qualifications and age-limits in the case of the Harijans and the tribal communities. He made special arrangements for their training so that they could appear and succeed in competitive

examinations by acquiring more knowledge than they would usually have. As a result of these efforts, the number of employees from the Scheduled Castes Scheduled Tribes in government services continuously increased. For the purpose of their all-round development, he appointed the Central Tribal Advisory Board and the Central Scheduled Castes Commission. He was the Chairman of both these bodies and directly controlled and guided their functioning. He also set up the Council of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes which was headed by Shri U.N. Dhebar.

Pantji had the surveys and studies done about the sweepers employed in various departments. This was a thing that was done for the first time in India. With a view to improve the quality of their life and introduce welfare measures, he set up a Commission with Prof. N.R. Malkani as its Chairman. Wherever Pantji went, he made it a point to visit the colonies of the tribals and the Harijans. He loved them with all his heart. He contributed a lot towards making available to them medical care and health services on a large scale.

He tried to settle the Banjaras to a steady life and encouraged the Harijans and the nomadic tribes to take to cottage industries so that they should be able to stand on their own legs. He set up a Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri M.A. Tikroo to prepare schemes for their uplift. Pantji rendered great services to the Harijans in political and administrative fields. He was a leader with great influence who realized the dream of Gandhiji in the field of administration. He not only advocated bringing those sections in the mainstream of society, he also wanted to make them economically self-reliant.

Even today, the Harijans regard him as their protector and saviour. His love for the Harijans was admired all over the country. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant's services were multi-dimensional and in every field he established a standard of service. Because of national contribution inspired by a spirit of dedicated service, he was honoured with the title of Bharat Ratna on January 26, 1957. He was indeed a jewel of India.

Political Crisis in Travancore

On March 23, 1956, the Congress Ministry of Shri Govinda Menon in Travancore-Cochin was replaced by the President's rule. Now that state is known as Kerala. The Govinda Menon Government had come to power as a result of the passing of a no-confidence motion against the Ministry of Pattam Thanu Pillai. The period of President Rule was extended for one more term. Ultimately, elections were held in Kerala as a result of which the Communist Government came to power in Kerala under the leadership of E.M.S. Namboodripad. It was the first Communist Government in that State. Although the Communists did not have an absolute majority, they formed the Government with the support of five independent members in the Legislature. Because of the tussle on all fronts as well as economic crisis in the state, the Government could not successfully rule the state.

The Communists were concerned with the welfare of the workers, yet they were required to resort to firing on the workers at Quilon, in which two workers were killed. This became a matter of discussion all over the country. It was Pantji's view that as far as the law and order situation was concerned, the responsibility lay with the Kerala Government. The Central Government had nothing at all to do with it. Subsequently, the issue was debated in the Lok Sabha. It was the popular belief that the Communists had been killing people in Kerala for political reasons and indulging in activities that defied the Constitution. Still Pantji emphasized that the Centre had nothing to do with it and the time had not yet come to intervene in the affairs of Kerala.

The architects of the Constitution had visualized a situation in which there may be one party in power at the Centre and other parties ruling in the States. Pantji was faced with the practical problem of determining the Centre-State relations in such a situation. When that situation arose, he set an ideal. Although the Congressmen were being harassed there, Pantji was fully acquainted with the Constitutional provisions and administrative

position. Hence, he did not intervene. The Kerala Liberation Committee threatened the Centre of launching a violent agitation. Popular wrath in Kerala was so widespread that on August 10, 1959, people wanted to demonstrate in front of the Secretariat and drag out the Communist Ministers.

The President Rule was declared in Kerala on March 31, 1959, since the Communists were unable to rule. Pantji declared that it was not the policy of the Centre to interfere in the affairs of the States. On the contrary, the Government of India followed a policy that would lead to increase co-operation between the States and the Centre. But during the past two and a half years, the situation in Kerala had become so vicious that the State was divided into the Communist and the non-Communist camps. It was impossible for the Kerala Government to continue in office in such an atmosphere of bitterness and wild passion. Even earlier, such proposals had come on two occasions, but Pantji had refused to interfere. There were fresh elections in Kerala in which the Congress emerged victorious and in February, 1960, the Congress Government was formed there under the leadership of Pillai.

Pantji's way of functioning as the Home Minister bring out his administrative diligence. At the same time, by his appropriate functioning, even the Congress benefitted in Kerala. If a Government functions properly, it also becomes strong in turn. This is well illustrated by Pantji's work with regard to Kerala. Till such time that the situation in a state did not threaten a constitutional breakdown, he did not allow the Centre to interfere. Because of his policy of abstaining from ready interference in the affairs of the State, people felt secure under the Constitution. They also felt that a change of Government would be in the interest of Kerala. That was how the Congress won the elections and also won the confidence of the people. The fact that Pantji aroused popular support for the Congress by his administrative abilities, and inspired their faith in the Congress was the proof of his strength as an administrator.

PANTJI'S PERSONALITY

PANDIT GOVIND BALLABH Pant was not only a builder of the nation, but was also an ideal family head and an enlightened house-holder. Even though his whole life was dedicated to the service of the people, he always took good care of his family and close relatives. He never interfered in the activities of his family and his relatives, but gave them due respect in their rightful field. Wherever they were and in whatever condition he always showered his affection on them and showed his goodwill. He corresponded regularly with his daughter and son from the Ahmednagar jail and encouraged them to build up their character, and acquainting them with practical life at the same time. He explained to them that success comes in life only by spending one's time in doing good things and an individual can make progress in life by constantly acquiring strength. He advised them to do some introspection in order to get over their weaknesses and shortcomings. One can improve only by triumphing over one's mistakes. He also made them aware about the importance of keeping good health, and encouraged them to read books written by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other learned men. He inspired them by giving knowledge about India's art, philosophy and learning and kept himself informed about those subjects so that his mind should always remain alert. He encouraged his children to read books on various subjects. He encouraged them to read over and over again Ramayana, the invaluable treasure of India's wisdom. He knew how to light the lamp not only in the temple, but also in his own home.

He wished that his children should be fully competent and decide their own course of life. Hence, he sent his only son Krishna

Chandra Pant to Lucknow University for the M.Sc. course. He also sent him to Germany for a degree in engineering. In deciding the future of his children, he not only followed his own ideas, but also took suggestions from his colleagues. In spite of his political differences, he asked his children to seek advice from Rafi Ahmed Kidwai. When Krishna Chandra Pant passed his M. Sc. from the Lucknow University with first class in 1954, he was offered a very good job. But Pantji sent him to Kidwai for advice. Kidwai was of the opinion that Krishna Chandra Pant should be sent to Germany for further studies. That would improve his prospects. Pantji accepted Kidwai's advice.

Babu Sampurnanand had been his political friend all through his life. As far as the Uttar Pradesh politics was concerned, Pantji trusted him more than anyone else. When Sampurnanandji had to resign as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Sampurnanandji and his colleagues felt that Pandit Jawaharlal had not been fair to him. They had expected that Pantji would definitely support Sampurnanandji. But Pantji did not do so, though his heart was with Sampurnanandji. One would rarely come across such an example of total devotion to one's leader. Sampurnanandji was confident about the support from Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and Lal Bahadur Shastri since Pantji was his very close friend and Lal Bahadur Shastri was his disciple.

After resigning as the Chief Minister, Sampurnanandji had come to Delhi on a visit. As a rule, he stayed with Pantji when he came to Delhi but this time he did not stay with him. Pantji was deeply hurt by it. He told Sampurnanandji that just because he had ceased to be the Chief Minister, he had not imagined that Sampurnanandji would cease to treat him as his friend. He conveyed his hurt feeling to Sampurnanandji. He told him that he has always given him an ineffaceable place in his heart. Sampurnanandji felt deep regret. Pantji knew how to build up and also maintain his relations with people. He also believed that personal relations were distinct from political relations. In today's politics, this concept is evidently missing.

Pantji was a follower of the orthodox Hindu religion imbued as he was with those *sanskaras*. He followed tradition and had a progressive outlook at the same time. He was a staunch Congressman. Always conscious of the family upbringing, he never failed to perform all religious rites of sacred thread ceremony, betrothal, wedding etc. He used to call for that purpose the best priest who was fully conversant not only with the scriptures but also with the customs and traditions of the family and the region. These days when people become prosperous and reach high position, they give preference only to their own conveniences and modern environment and take pride in calling themselves ultra-modern by destroying those very values that have helped them reach a high status in life. But Pantji was an extremely ingenious and a thorough Indian who possessed the quintessence of goodness, from the manner of dress to food habits. He did not eat even onions. Whether as the Home Minister or the candidate seeking votes, his dress was always the same.

There was no great dimensional change in his personality like we find today. Even as a minister he wanted to lead the same type of life as he did when he lived with the people. In politics, he was always surrounded by crowds and his house was the meeting ground for the people. But even when surrounded by people, he found some moments for himself and even when alone, he was surrounded by the problems of the nation. His mind, though his own, had been completely devoted to the people. Whoever the person with whom he built up relation, he knew very well how to keep it up. He used to shower his love and affection on everyone and respected him in every situation without considering his status. But he also maintained a certain distance so that people should keep within their limits. It is very difficult to maintain an equilibrium in life. Only a saint may be able to do it. He was a sage in Indian politics.

He mixed freely with people and everyone, who after expressing their worry to him, felt light at heart. But no one even dared to talk to him about anything beyond his limit. That rare combination of affection and discipline was part of his personality. He always

kept up his relations with people. If ever any relationship floundered, the responsibility was always on the other side.

From his appearance, people got the impression that he would be hardly interested in finer things of life. But he was very much interested in cultural functions, mushairas etc. He also did *riaz* in classical music, but due to circumstances, he had not been able to pursue it. He also took interest in literature and helped writers. He was also a lover of Sanskrit and while he was the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, he had made Sanskrit a compulsory subject.

He knew how to protect not only individuals but also his team, and stood by it. The whole nation knew that Maulana Azad and Babu Sampurnanand enjoyed great renown as men of learning and were leading political figures. Their ideas were diametrically opposite to each other. Maulana Azad was the Education Minister at the Centre and Babu Sampurnanand was his counter part in Uttar Pradesh. Maulana Azad was upset by Babu Sampurnanand's ideas about education as well as his way of functioning. Sampurnanand had his own ideas about literature, education and culture. He was in Pantji's ministry. Pantji was in complete agreement with his education policy. Hence, he did not let Sampurnanand be affected at all by Maulana Azad's wrath and he did not give in on any issue. As a result, Babu Sampurnanand could work in Uttar Pradesh in the light of his principles without any fear. Pantji was always eager and anxious to protect his team and that was why he always headed his team.

He was not one of those who are always ready to push up their family members. That was the reason why during his lifetime he kept his only son Krishna Chandra Pant out of politics, although his family did not remain untouched by the effort of hardships, affliction and pain that politics brought on him. Such an attitude provides an example to be followed in political field even today.

Pantji was a leader who also thought about the future. Today, people want to become leaders themselves, but a true leader is one

who also prepares others for leadership. In this matter, Pantji really had a future vision. He recognized efficiency in all those people who came to his notice and got work out of them according to their abilities. Some of them occupied the position of the Prime Minister of India who would be always remembered for their unique work in their respective fields. Name of Lal Bahadur Shastri, Charan Singh, and Keshav Deo Malaviya can be mentioned in this connection. All the three of them thought along three different lines, but they were in Pantji's ministry. Pantji was always on the look out for persons with merit. He not only built up a new generation in the field of politics, but in the field of administration, literature, culture and art also his contribution had been that of a builder and a director.

He was not really a leader, a builder, a politician and a statesman, but an extremely generous father. It has been a tradition in India that a person dedicates his son to the service of society. Pantji proved himself to be a follower of that tradition by offering to society a son like Krishna Chandra Pant. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was truly a marvellous builder who has left an indelible imprint on the history of modern India.

APPENDIX-I

*A. Speech in Parliament **

Honourable Chairman: We shall now consider the adjournment motion (about elections in Andhra Pradesh). I request the Honourable Home Minister to make his statement.

Home Minister Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant: Following your direction, I stand before you to make my comments on the adjournment motion (about elections in Andhra Pradesh), which had been notified yesterday. I have made investigations into the charges made by those who have drafted the motion. I have found those charges baseless, false and exaggerated. It is a matter of sorrow for me that those questions have been raised in the present situation. The people and the Government officials of Andhra Pradesh are engaged in a big task at present. There are more than 101 million voters in Andhra Pradesh. There are nearly 14,000 polling booths and the preparations for the elections are underway. The state has been divided into five regions. Out of these five regions, elections have been held on the 11th, 15th and 18th of this month in three regions only. Voting would be held in the remaining two regions on the 23rd and 28th of this month. Looking at the sensitive nature of this task, the popular enthusiasm has suffered a setback, and those who are interested in the elections are in greater distress. Keeping this in mind, it would have been desirable on our part to help raise the enthusiasm among the people and made their task easier. In my view, it would be more advantageous if we exercise a certain restraint on such occasions when other ways are still open to remove grievances, whether real or imaginary. Any way, this has not been done.

* Statement in Parliament made in English by the Home Minister Govind Ballabh Pant, on the adjournment motion about the elections in Andhra Pradesh, February 22, 1955

Shri N.C. Chatterjee: Has this issue anything to do with the comments of the Home Minister?

Hon. Chairman: Let him finish making his statement.

Shri N.C. Chatterjee: Did we ask for his statement based on facts or his homilies?

Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant: As you wish.

The adjournment motion has been in an elaborated and disguised manner. The facts relating to the charges are vague by themselves. But apart from the specific charges, the charges mentioned in the introductory portion of the motion can be called vague as a whole. Those who have brought in the adjournment motion are very resourceful and are capable of gross exaggeration. I do not wish to involve myself with that. I am also not aware of the kinds of incidents taking place in Andhra Pradesh. But I do hope that our discussion here would not affect the happenings there.

As far as these charges are concerned, I have already stated that there is not an iota of truth in them. The first charge is related to the polling on the 15th February, 1955, in the Nallamedda constituency of the Assembly elections. It is alleged that 5,000 voters had been forcibly prevented from voting in a polling booth in that constituency. The State Government has no information about it. In my view, the Government has investigated into that matter very carefully and it was found that no such incident had taken place there. An incident about which some information was available was a very minor affair. Some 15 or 20 voters, while going to their polling booth, tried to trespass through the sugarcane field that belonged to a candidate of a rival party. The man who was keeping a watch on the field, protested and stopped them from going that way. Those voters got excited and bashed up that man. He was injured and started bleeding. At that stage, the villagers gathered and there was a fight. The voters returned to their village. When both

the sides registered the complaint the police went to that village and volunteered to escort the voters to the polling booth if they wanted to cast their votes. Those voters refused to take police protection. That is all the information we have been able to get. There is not a single case in which the police refused to give protection on request. In fact, this is a baseless charge. We are surprised that no such complaint has been registered by anyone and no such information had been given to those interested in casting their votes.

Smt. Renu Chakravathy (Basirhat): Yes, it has been brought to our notice.

Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant: In that case, the area in which that incident took place and the name of the concerned individual would have been definitely found a mention in the adjournment motion. But there is no such mention in the adjournment motion.

Well, in this particular case, there was great enthusiasm and polling was peaceful. Nearly 60 to 70 percent voters cast their votes. Had there been any obstructions in exercising their votes enthusiastically and freely, there would not have been such a heavy polling. This election is going to last for a week and longer. Not only the representatives of the local newspapers but also the responsible correspondents of a large number of newspapers are observing these elections. Some of them even represent foreign newspapers. They are unlikely to miss such incidents.

Shri Nambiar (Nayuram): Sir, that is another matter.

Chairman: Kindly let him finish making his statement.

Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant: I have been in Parliament for a long time.

Shri B.P. Nambiar (Chirayinkal): We are aware of it.

Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant: I am glad you are aware of it.

There is another complaint about another constituency of the Assembly elections. Even though the number (of voters) is between 5,000 to 15,000, there is no difference in their nature. The State Government has received no information from any administrative officer regarding the election or the administration. Not even the candidates have lodged any complaint. In such a situation, we wonder where we should look for complaints.

The third complaint is about smashing the office of the Communist Party. Anyone who tried to do such a thing must be really a brave person. No doubt several complaints were lodged, but in so far as this particular complaint is concerned, all records were examined. But it seems that only one complaint was found and that too was false, and the matter ended there.

Smt. Renu Chakravathy: What complaint?

Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant: About smashing the offices

Smt. Renu Chakravathy: Which offices?

Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant: They have not been specified. And I do not know what is actually implied by "smashing." Were the building housing the offices destroyed or the records were carried away from the offices?

Shri Nambiar: Records were taken away and the furniture broken.

Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant: I think the honourable member is well-versed in the English language. The word "smashing" does not suggest to me the meaning that is implied here. Whatever it may be, taking it in the ordinary sense, no such thing seems to have happened there.

The other charge relates to an attack on a particular person. True, that person has received a minor injury. I do not wish to go

into the circumstances in which he received the injury. There can be many reasons for it. Whether we blame him or others, I would not like to say anything in that matter, because the investigations are in progress. The complaint has been registered and hence (my comment) would amount to contempt of the court. I shall not express my opinion in that matter. But some people have told me there are only 30 cases of such physical clashes, and two third of such injured persons belong to the Congress. I have my sympathies for all those who have injured. But it seems that those 30 persons received injuries because they did not give up discharging their duty with enthusiasm and honesty.

No other comment is needed in the case of general elections. I wish to bring it to your notice that the elections in Andhra Pradesh had been called for by the Governor. There is no ministry, there is no Congress. The Governor is an experienced, enthusiastic, and qualified administrator. He announced the very day he took charge that he would order free and fair elections.

Shri M.S. Gurupadaswamy (Mysore): After that?

Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant: He stands firm on his declaration.

Shri Namiar : The next election - "not now."

Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant: Many people may remain or they may not, but we must wait till the next elections. Whatever it is, he has remained firm on his declaration. He sent order to District authorities and other related offices from time to time that they should carry on their work with diligence without fear or favour. He appealed the people to exercise patience and restraint so that a favourable atmosphere was created to hold the elections and protect democracy. In spite of that, some incidents, did take place which it was not possible to prevent. It is good fortune when people were contesting in the election with such enthusiasm, there were very few untoward incidents. I do not wish to name those who suffered the most nor those who were the assailants. It would be better to leave

the matter at this point. I would give a benefit of doubt to the members sitting in the opposition. I cherish no doubts about them. I am confident that the returning officers in these election would not allow these proceedings to be obstructed in any way and the elections would be completed without any obstacles in a peaceful and successful manner.

*B. Responsibility towards Hindi***

It is a matter of great pleasure that the President of India has graced the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of the Kashi Nagari Pracharni Sabha by his presence today. The Institution whose seeds were sown 60 years ago by Dr. Shyam Sundar Das, Pandit Ram Narayan Misra and Dr. Shiv Kumar Singh, has now grown into a beautiful tree and has brought good results. The Nagari Pracharini Sabha has done unique work in securing for Hindi its present status and in its literary development. Hindi is the national language today. The mention of the hurdles that were successfully overcome for establishing Hindi in its proud position would be ineffaceable in the history of the Hindi language as well as that of the nation. The Nagari Pracharini Sabha has made a significant contribution to the nurturing of patriotic feeling. In this connection, the inspiration and blessings of the noble minded Madan Mohan Malaviya because of which this institution has grown and developed, deserves to be mentioned.

It would be difficult to describe all the activities of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha. The development of the script and style of Hindi, discovering ancient literature, creation of new and inspiring literature, bringing together all relevant aspect into organised manner, writing the authentic Hindi grammar, compilation of comprehensive dictionaries, definition of authentic history of (Hindi) literature are the fields in which the Nagari Pracharini Sabha

**Message sent on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the Kashi Nagari Pracharini Sabha.

had done significant work. It has given birth to the All India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan which is functioning so beautifully in the country.

The Sabha has still a lot of work to do. Hindi, by attaining the status of the national language, has taken upon itself an honourable but heavier responsibility. All of us have to try very hard to shoulder that responsibility. We have still before us the onerous task of making Hindi acceptable with love by every Indian and make that language capable of fully conveying the principles of different branches of knowledge and science and manual skills. We must encourage the writing of creative literature of high standard and rid the language of its shortcomings and deficiencies. I am confident that the Sabha would make efforts in that direction and succeed in its efforts. I express on this occasion my good wishes to the Sabha.

Varanasi

22, Phalgun, 2010 Vikram

(March 6, 1953)

C. A letter from Prison

April 26, 1944

Dear Lakshmi Raja,

I was very happy to read your letters which I had received almost a week ago. You have got unexpected and fairly long holiday after the winter vacation in school. Otherwise, at this time of the term, you should be studying quite hard.

How have you utilized such long holidays you got by accident? You must welcome such holidays, because thereby you would be able to make up for the studies you were not able to complete because of your absence from school. Now you must be in line with other students in your class and by making up for the loss in your studies,

you must continuously make satisfactory progress. Have you read during holidays some good books from your library or other libraries? You must have finished reading Jawaharlalji's Autobiography by now. Have you seen another book by him named 'The Glimpses of World History'? That book is extremely interesting and informative. It gives the history (of the world) from the dawn of civilization to the present times. If you read that book, you would know about the glorious past of our country. Even the greatest scholars and thinkers of modern Europe and American accept the importance of modern India. It is not merely because of our philosophy, religion, art, astrology, literature and various fields of knowledge that were ahead of the world. In other fields too, India's contribution was equally significant. Our ancestors had large fleets of ships by which they went to overseas countries of East and West for trade. They had their colonies not only in the neighbouring countries of Asia but also in the islands in the Pacific Ocean. Typical Indian art objects, almost two thousand years old, are found not only in Central Asian countries but also in the South-East islands in the Pacific like the Philippines, Java, Sumatra and in regions like Siam, Indo-China, Malaya etc. Indians ruled in these countries for over a thousand years. You would not be able to find such important books in your school, but you must try to obtain them from elsewhere, so that you can get the inspiration from the heritage our ancient sages, seers and political leaders left for their future generations. We are proud about the past heritage of our country, but you should not also close your eyes to the things happening in the present; because the future of the country depends on us, most of all on you and the growing children of your age. I am fully convinced that you would be able to install India in its legitimate position and would bring to your country the honour and dignity it had gained in the past.

With Babu's blessings and love.

APPENDIX-II

Pantji in the Eyes of his Contemporaries

Madan Mohan Malaviya

I have known Pandit Pant for a long time. His personal life is based on simplicity, sanctity, tolerance, patriotism and truth. Whoever came in contact with him in private or public life, always admired his qualities.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

Pandit Pant always worked with devotion unmindful of obstacles. He was not only an able parliamentarian, but also a great national leader. He rendered unique service during the freedom struggle and in nation-building. He always stood firm in the midst of troubles and even in the face of difference, he maintained his mental and intellectual balance. This was characteristic of him. I had known Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant since 1922 and I can say with authority that he not only took care of me but also showered love upon me.

Dr. Radhakrishnan:

He occupies a significant and unimpaired place in the history of India during the freedom struggle and after independence. I had heard about his various activities in the Central Legislative Assembly as the whip of the Swaraj Party. Great people like Motilal Nehru, Malaviya, Srinivas Ayengar were there at that time. I came into somewhat closer contact with him when I was the Vice-

Chancellor of the Banaras Hindu University from 1939 to 1947. And when he became the leader in the Rajya Sabha, our relationship became closer and more intimate. It is a matter of pride for me that as long as I was there, he met me at least twice a week. During these visits, he did not discuss parliamentary matters but talked about his experiences of self-contemplation. His last statement in the House was on February 21 when he was preparing to reply to the President's address. He had sustained physical injury during the freedom struggle, but it had not affected his feelings in the least. He was constantly aware of his own faults and shortcomings. As a parliamentarian, his opponents played in his hands. He could deal terrible blows. He knew when he was ridiculed, but he had felt bitterness for none. His life is a lesson in service to the nation. He has left behind an inspiring example.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

He was a very dear friend and a companion. He was a great leader during the days of our freedom struggle. He had been our great leader even after independence. Among the advisors, he was the most enlightened one. At the same time, he was a man of strong determination and was devoted to action. He had no feelings of attachment or detachment for anyone. He was the dear son of the Himalayas, and was calm and firm as those mountains. He was steady like a rock and was the beacon light that guided the nation. He showed his brilliance in Parliament, but more so in life. He loved his motherland with devotion and served for the welfare and progress of the children of Bharat Mata. In spite of his failing health and handicaps, he gladly rendered uninterrupted service to the nation till the last moment. We have been friends and companions for the last 25 years. We had led a procession together 31 years ago and we had been cruelly beaten up by armed policemen. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was an extraordinarily brilliant son of India. He had great capacity to work. He always kept calm. Physically, he was big, but he never lost his equanimity by getting angry.

Dr. Sampurnanand

Pantji was a great leader not only of India's freedom struggle but also in the rebuilding of India. He was a source of strength and love for people in every field. We never considered him an outsider and whenever we needed guidance, we always looked up to him.

Having worked together on several fronts over the years of continuous strain and conflicts during and after the freedom struggle, our relations grew closer and closer.... He was an expert in parliamentary affairs. He belonged to the tradition of Malaviya and Gokhale, compared to whose speeches, the legislative proceedings today seem lackadaisical Ultimately, Pantji became a Union Minister and he had to face the renowned national leaders who spoke in Parliament as representatives of various political parties. On such occasions, his personality as a parliamentarian attained great heights.

His personality was not confined merely to the entanglements of parliamentary affairs. He was equally proficient in Hindi and English, and he was an indispensable part of the Congress High Command. Whenever a difficult resolution had to be proposed or the All-India Congress Committee had to be brought round to accept an unpleasant proposition, Pantji was pushed forward. I recall two such occasions—one, when Subhas Chandra Bose was removed from the post of the Congress President, and two, when Shri Purushottam Das Tandon had to be removed.

It was the fortune of Uttar Pradesh that Pandit Pant was the Chief Minister of the State at that time. Because of his ingeniousness, equanimity and deft handling, so many obstacles could be easily overcome. Because he had been a public servant over a long period, he could easily understand the feelings of the public and he had also won the confidence of his officials. All of them realized that their interests were safe in his hands. The credit for successfully pulling Uttar Pradesh out of difficulties mainly goes to him. His colleagues gave him unqualified support. They were

the trusted men of the people, but Pantji was definitely above all of them. If it is a quality to maintain one's balance of mind in the midst of a most acrimonious debate, Pantji was the greatest example. He could remain unmoved like a rock in the face of the most scathing attacks by his adversaries. He could also find time to rest and made full use of that time. He had a taste for music and could burst into loud laughs.

One great defect in him was that he did not like to be bound by time. Every now and then, I used to explain to him the virtue of punctuality. Very affectionately, he would accept my advice. He often remarked: "I am scared of Sampurnanand." But it was difficult for him to come out of that old habit. In a person like him, one began to like even that weakness.

I remember a function we had arranged to celebrate his birthday. One after the other, speakers praised his good qualities in superlative terms. I am sure that Pantji himself was not aware of possessing all those qualities that were being mentioned. He felt very uneasy to hear all those praises and it was very clear that he was keen to walk out under some pretext or the other. Somehow the function came to an end with,

"May you live safely for a thousand years,
With fifty thousand days to every year."

Only after that I got my turn to speak. I said that it was a matter of satisfaction that Pantji did not have most of the qualities that had been mentioned. The words in which people had wished him a long life (a thousand years with fifty thousand days to a year) was futile and it would be good not to accept such a desire. Such a long life would be burdensome for Pantji himself and would prove to be a curse for mankind as well. Pantji calmed down after what I said and that function did not remain a purely sentimental affair.

He was one of those people who are not individuals but institutions. Knowing him from close quarters was a pleasant experience.

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